

# RECOIL

**BUYER'S GUIDE**  
WHARNCLIFFE  
BLADES  
PG.38

**GUN LIFESTYLE:** GEAR • TECHNOLOGY • SPORT • OUTDOOR • HOME & PERSONAL DEFENSE



## GEN II

**WE MAKE A SUB 7-LB .308**

PG.54



**ARSENAL  
STRIKE ONE**

PG.76



**ROAD ARMOR  
F-250**

PG.32

- ▶ ZEROED IN: COLIN EDWARDS
- ▶ PT. PRACTICAL FITNESS
- ▶ TESTED: ADCOR DEFENSE A-556 ELITE
- ▶ DEAD AIR'S SANDMAN SUPPRESSOR
- ▶ PERSONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE
- ▶ THE PSYCHOLOGY OF GUNFIGHTING
- ▶ SEALED MINDSET ONLINE TRAINING
- ▶ AGUILA AMMUNITION
- ▶ ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL MUSEUM
- ▶ EXTREME-CLOSE-QUARTERS PISTOL SKILLS
- ▶ BELTS BUYER'S GUIDE

< DPMS, Safariland, ITW, AP Custom, Beyond Clothing, Versa-Pod  
PG.14

**AGENCY ARMS**



PG.122

**5.11** **LOADOUT INSERT**

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ISSUE 20



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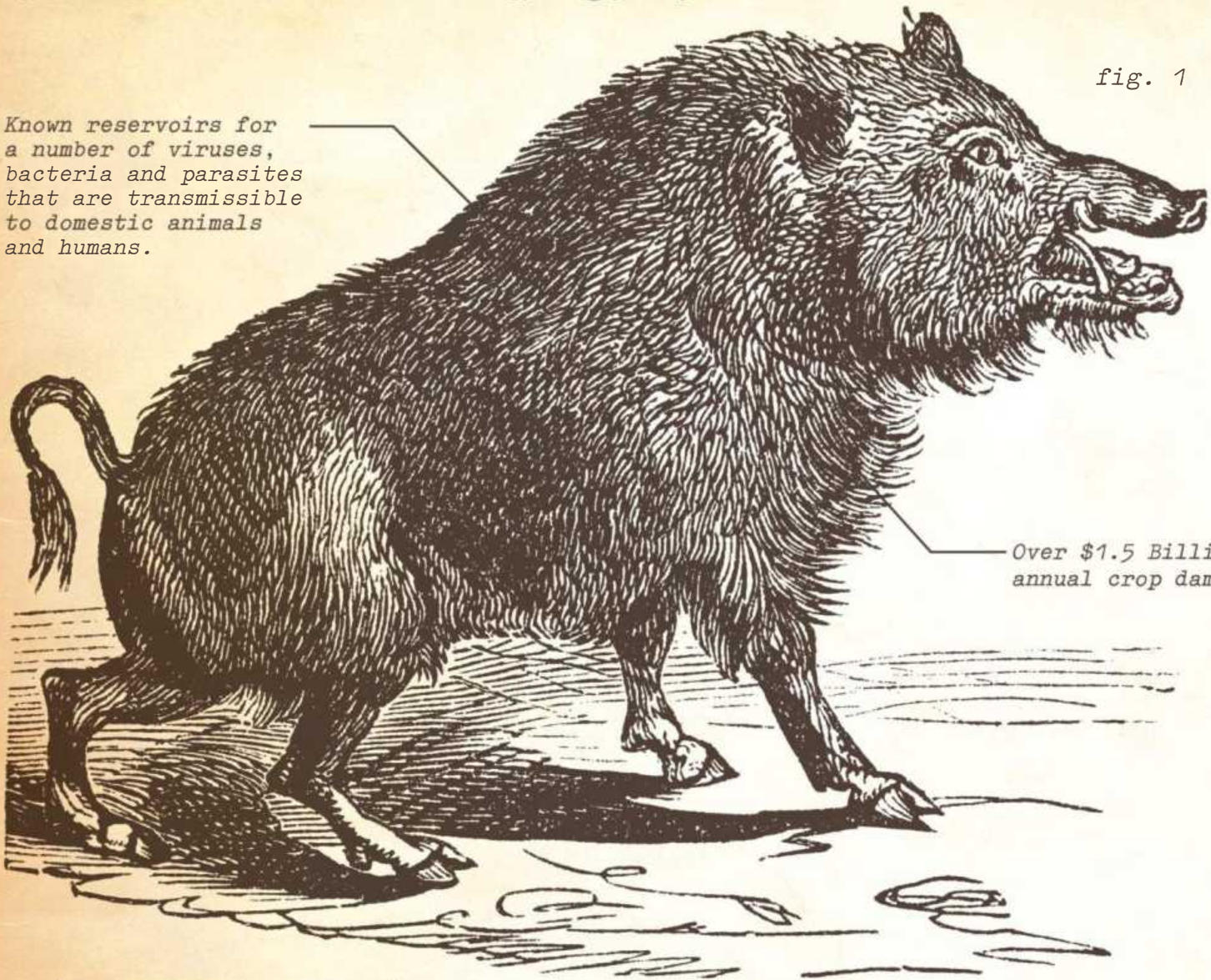


Diagnosis:

# WILD HOGS

fig. 1

Known reservoirs for  
a number of viruses,  
bacteria and parasites  
that are transmissible  
to domestic animals  
and humans.



Over \$1.5 Billion in  
annual crop damage.



fig. 2

## Symptoms:

### HEPATITIS E VIRUS:

Boar to Human transmission

### TRICHINELLA SPIRALIS:

Human transmission via Infected Domestic Pigs

### BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS:

Infects Cattle, Humans and Other Wildlife



Treatment:

# TAKE YOUR SHOT



ThermoSight RS

fig. 3

ThermoSight T70



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- Multiple Power Management Options

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## FIREARM SAFETY IS TOP PRIORITY

RECOIL reminds you to be safe and always obey firearms safety rules:

1. Treat every gun as if it were loaded.
  2. Always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction.
  3. Keep your finger off the trigger until ready to fire.
  4. Be aware of your target's foreground and background.
- All contents in RECOIL Magazine are professionally photographed in a closed studio or range. Do not attempt to recreate any photographs depicted in this magazine.



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054



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## ON THE COVER



COVER PHOTO BY STRAIGHT 8

### 1 RIFLE

**MAKE:**  
DPMS  
**MODEL:**  
Gen II Recon  
**MSRP:**  
See page 62  
**URL:**  
[www.dpmsinc.com](http://www.dpmsinc.com)

### 2 JACKET

**MAKE:**  
Beyond Clothing  
**MODEL:**  
Lochi Jacket  
**MSRP:**  
\$462  
**URL:**  
[www.beyondclothing.com](http://www.beyondclothing.com)

### 3 SHIRT

**MAKE:**  
Beyond Clothing  
**MODEL:**  
A9 Mission Shirt  
**MSRP:**  
\$155  
**URL:**  
[www.beyondclothing.com](http://www.beyondclothing.com)

### 4 PANTS

**MAKE:**  
Beyond Clothing  
**MODEL:**  
Helios Brokk Pant  
**MSRP:**  
\$200  
**URL:**  
[www.beyondclothing.com](http://www.beyondclothing.com)

### 5 BELT

**MAKE:**  
Safariland  
**MODEL:**  
ELS with 578 GLS holster  
**MSRP:**  
Varies according to accessories  
**URL:**  
[www.safariland.com](http://www.safariland.com)

### 6 PISTOL MAG POUCH

**MAKE:**  
Safariland  
**MODEL:**  
773 Competition Open Top Magazine Pouch  
**MSRP:**  
\$29  
**URL:**  
[www.safariland.com](http://www.safariland.com)

### 7 SHOTSHELL CARRIER

**MAKE:**  
AP Custom  
**MODEL:**  
QL 8C Shotgun Shell Carrier  
**MSRP:**  
\$105  
**URL:**  
[www.apcustomusa.com](http://www.apcustomusa.com)

### 8 SHOTSHELL CARRIER

**MAKE:**  
Safariland  
**MODEL:**  
085 Shotgun Shell Carrier  
**MSRP:**  
\$30  
**URL:**  
[www.safariland.com](http://www.safariland.com)

### 9 BIPOD

**MAKE:**  
Versa-Pod  
**MODEL:**  
Model 923  
**MSRP:**  
\$232  
**URL:**  
[www.versapod.com](http://www.versapod.com)

## OFF THE COVER

### 10 BACKPACK

**MAKE:**  
Arc'teryx LEAF  
**MODEL:**  
Khard 60 Pack  
**MSRP:**  
\$549  
**URL:**  
[leaf.arcteryx.com](http://leaf.arcteryx.com)

### 11 WATCH

**MAKE:**  
Smith & Bradley  
**MODEL:**  
Ambush  
**MSRP:**  
\$645  
**URL:**  
[www.smithbradleyltd.com](http://www.smithbradleyltd.com)

### 12 BOOTS

**MAKE:**  
Reebok Tactical  
**MODEL:**  
Rapid Response  
**MSRP:**  
\$140  
**URL:**  
[www.reebokwork.com](http://www.reebokwork.com)

### 13 EYE PRO

**MAKE:**  
Rudy Project  
**MODEL:**  
Genetyk Shooting  
**MSRP:**  
\$375  
**URL:**  
[www.rudyproject.com](http://www.rudyproject.com)

### 14 AMMO

**MAKE:**  
Polycase  
**MODEL:**  
ARX Inceptor 114gr 45ACP  
**MSRP:**  
\$25  
**URL:**  
[www.polycaseammo.com](http://www.polycaseammo.com)

### 15 PISTOL

**MAKE:**  
Para USA  
**MODEL:**  
Black Ops Combat  
**MSRP:**  
\$1,325  
**URL:**  
[www.para-usa.com](http://www.para-usa.com)

### 16 RIFLE MAG POUCH

**MAKE:**  
ITW  
**MODEL:**  
FastMag Heavy  
**MSRP:**  
\$35  
**URL:**  
[www.itwnexusadvanced.com](http://www.itwnexusadvanced.com)

### 17 RIFLE MAG POUCH

**MAKE:**  
Safariland  
**MODEL:**  
774 Rifle Magazine Pouch  
**MSRP:**  
\$18  
**URL:**  
[www.safariland.com](http://www.safariland.com)

### 18 KNIFE

**MAKE:**  
TOPS Knives  
**MODEL:**  
Back Bite  
**MSRP:**  
\$165  
**URL:**  
[www.topsknives.com](http://www.topsknives.com)







01

02

09



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03



17

16



18



12



04





BY IAIN HARRISON

In this issue, we get serious. While it's always fun to look at the latest and sexiest gear, the most potent weapon we wield is information, and sometimes it pays to knuckle down and present topics that at first glance might seem dry and academic. While most of us would rather gargle razor blades than study an insurance policy, we believe in giving you the tools to cover your ass if you're forced to use the hardware we all own and enjoy. Don't worry, there's plenty of blades, bullets, and babes to counterbalance the grown-up stuff, but we're duty-bound to bring you content you can't get anywhere else.

Walking down the aisles of my local bookstore the other day, I was impressed by not only the quantity of firearms magazines, but the number of them that were desperately trying to copy RECOIL — new versions are popping up like

weeds. While a few are worthy competitors, others are still churned out by the same tired hacks who've never met an advertiser's product they didn't like and write while wearing kneepads.

While insiders have no trouble discerning the difference, how is the casual observer supposed to tell the two apart? One quick test might be to see if the editorial staff actually live the lifestyle they espouse. Do any of the editors actually attend classes and train hard alongside their readership, or do they restrict themselves to all-expenses-paid press junkets and limit their physical exertion to opening freelancers' emails? Is their status as firearms "experts" beyond reproach because of their extensive knowledge, or simply because they never lay it on the line and compete with their readers.

Walking in on a recent staff meeting, I noticed one of our guys chatting about travel arrangements for an upcoming combatives course, while two others had the stage diagrams for a local three-gun match up on their laptop screens. Background conversations ran the gamut of moonshine, vehicle modifications, calendar girls, and the use of Tannerite to destroy counterfeit optics. Which felt a lot like home.

Cheers,  
Iain





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1

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**MAKE:**

Brim-It Hat Clips

**MODEL:**

Various

**MSRP:**

\$10 each

**URL:**[www.brim-it.com](http://www.brim-it.com)

2

If you're looking to build an AR-15 that doesn't feel like you're running and gunning with a cylindrical kettlebell in your hands, get ready for Guntec USA's 12-inch free-floating handguard that weighs 9.1 ounces (including the barrel nut). Set for a September release, it features heavy-duty but lightweight construction thanks to its T6 aluminum body. This thin design incorporates the KeyMod system and has a monolithic top rail so you can mount all of your favorite toys in just the right places. Made in the USA and will also be available in flat dark earth and olive drab green.

**MAKE:**

Guntec USA

**MODEL:**

GT-12JKO

**MSRP:**

\$179

**URL:**[www.guntecusa.com](http://www.guntecusa.com)

3

As head of Emerson Knives, Ernie Emerson is known for his stellar craftsmanship and artistry with blades. What you might not know is that he's also a deadly martial arts instructor with years of experience teaching Emerson Combat Systems. Due to popular demand, he's now expanding on those combatives seminars through a series of books on fighting, including *Surviving Inside the Kill Zone*. Though a quick read at 116 pages, it's packed with strategies and tactics he teaches Navy SEALs and other elite operatives around the world. Rather than focus on techniques that only work in specific scenarios, he explains the methodologies used by bad guys, what to look for in a training system, and how to make lifestyle changes to not become potential prey — in other words, effective concepts based on real-life confrontations.

**MAKE:**

Emerson Knives

**MODEL:***Surviving Inside the Kill Zone***MSRP:**

\$12

**URL:**[www.emersonknives.com](http://www.emersonknives.com)

4

Small enough to fit within Magpul MOE and MIAD grips, Gerber's latest AR-specific multitool takes up less space than an Oreo, but is much more useful. The three-piece, non-cream-filled device is made from 420 HS steel and snaps together to form several tools for working on castle nuts, muzzle devices, and sights. It features a 7mm wrench and hex bits sized specifically for M-LOK accessories. In all, there are 13 tools hiding in the tiny maze of metal. We're dubious about using something so small to work on castle nuts and muzzle devices, but Gerber says its engineers used physics and witchcraft to give the tool the leverage needed to turn big bolts.

**MAKE:**

Gerber

**MODEL:**

Short Stack

**MSRP:**

\$54

**URL:**[www.gerbergear.com](http://www.gerbergear.com)

1



2



4





# 5

Plates and a chest rig can be quite conspicuous if you're not in uniform. So Force Training Institute has created the MTS (Multi-Threat Shield). It looks like your average laptop bag, but within a second or two can unfold into a 3-foot-long blanket of ballistic protection. We didn't get a chance to test the 8-pound bag at the range, but its makers promise the MTS can take several hits from most handguns, shotguns, and submachine guns. (A level III insert plate for high-powered rifle rounds is sold separately.) There's also an expandable pouch with covert access so you can draw anything from a handgun to, well, a laptop.

**MAKE:**  
Force Training Institute  
**MODEL:**  
MTS  
**MSRP:**  
\$899  
**URL:**  
[www.forcetraining.com](http://www.forcetraining.com)

# 6

The Streamlight ProTac HL 3 ups the illumination ante, letting you wield retina-searing LED capabilities in your hand for much longer run times. It can blast a suntan-inducing 1,100 lumens for up to two hours on high, emit 35 lumens for roughly 43 hours on low, and flash a strobe (for signaling or disorienting a bad guy) for two hours. Among many other features, the ProTac HL 3 has a tough anodized-aluminum body that's impact resistant and waterproof up to 1 meter. It comes with three CR123 batteries and a nylon holster. If you prefer something sturdier to hold your flashlight, Streamlight also offers the Tactical Holster 88051 (sold separately). This lightweight polymer holster has a spring-loaded interior wall that lets it house various Streamlight models, including the ProTac HL 3.

**MAKE:**  
Streamlight  
**MODEL:**  
ProTac HL 3 / Tactical Holster 88051  
**MSRP:**  
\$155 for the ProTac HL 3 / \$20 for the Tactical Holster  
**URL:**  
[www.streamlight.com](http://www.streamlight.com)

# 7

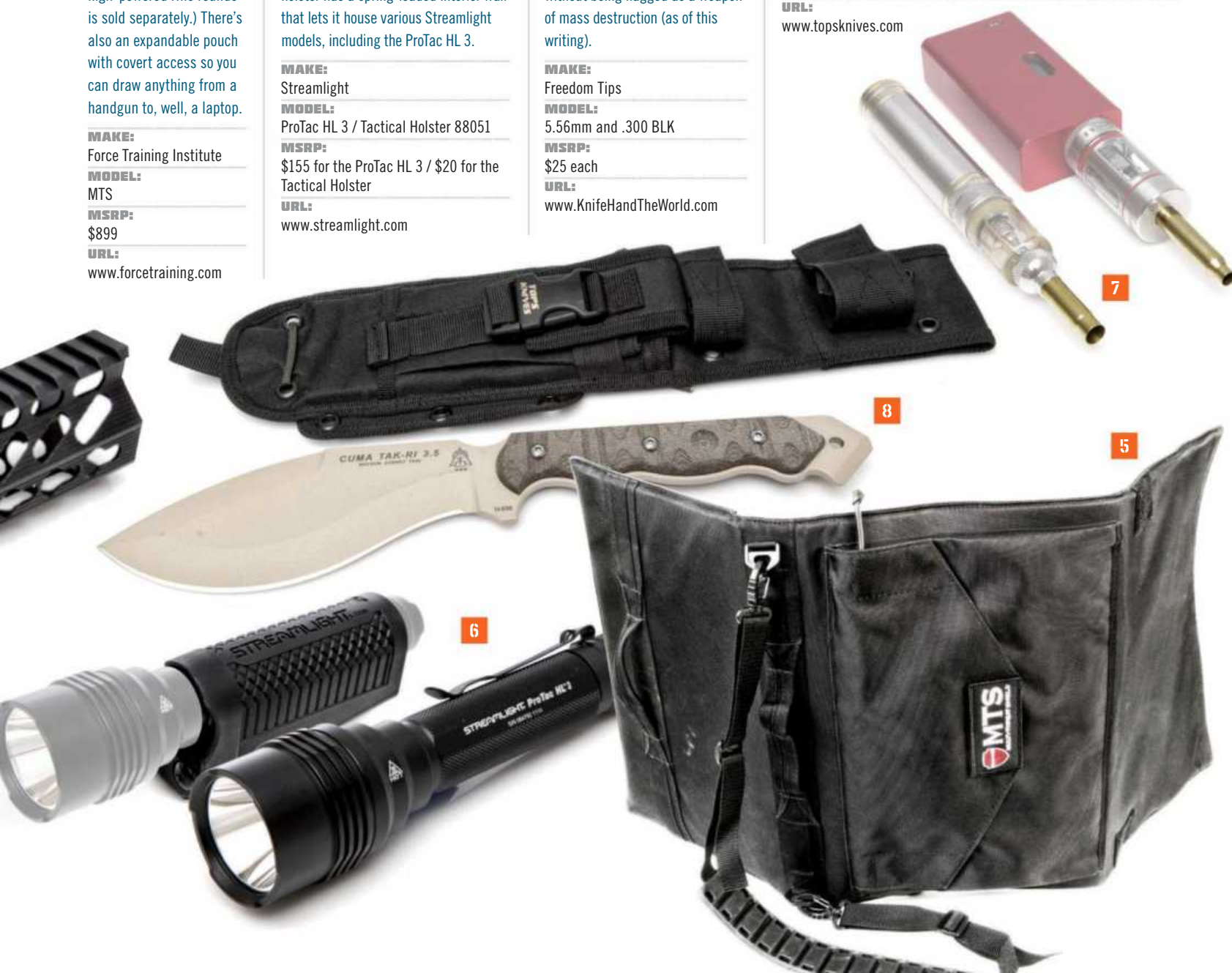
No one likes that feeling of winging it at work when you're under a tight schedule, but at least now you can suck on the casing when you bite the bullet. Horribly mixed metaphors aside, you might want to check out these cool little accessories if you vape. These custom drip-tips for e-cigarette vaporizers are currently available in 5.56mm and .300 BLK with more versions to come. They're made from actual brass casings, which have been modified to fit most 510/901 units. Brought to you by the naughty boys at Breach-Bang-Clear, the Freedom Tips have successfully made it through four TSA checkpoints without being flagged as a weapon of mass destruction (as of this writing).

**MAKE:**  
Freedom Tips  
**MODEL:**  
5.56mm and .300 BLK  
**MSRP:**  
\$25 each  
**URL:**  
[www.KnifeHandTheWorld.com](http://www.KnifeHandTheWorld.com)

# 8

The CUMA TAK-RI from TOPS Knives is a unique, if intimidating, fixed blade that combines various aesthetics to meet a wide range of challenges. As its name implies, this tactical tool finds inspiration from the kukri (the knife found in Nepal and other Southeast Asian regions) to serve as a camp knife, a self-defense weapon, and a survival implement. The curved bottom edge allows for ballistic slicing, the serrations closer to the handle can rip through cords, and the top edge lets you use reverse swings while giving the blade effective piercing power, too. While the nylon sheath isn't anything to write home about, the full-tang blade is made of 1095 high-carbon steel that's incredibly tough, holds a fine edge, and is easy to sharpen. Just be sure to maintain it, as it's definitely not stainless.

**MAKE:**  
TOPS Knives  
**MODEL:**  
CUMA TAK-RI  
**MSRP:**  
\$240  
**URL:**  
[www.topsknives.com](http://www.topsknives.com)





9

Tuning your AR's gas system is usually a one-and-done affair, as messing around with settings for different bullet weights and loads can be a pain. Unless, of course, you shoot in both suppressed and antisocial modes, in which case you'll want to dial down the amount of gas entering the system when mounting a can, otherwise you might end up beating your gun to death. The Dictator from POF gives the user seven click-adjustable settings from closed to WFO and, like most of the company's products, is built like a tank. As a result, it's a bit bigger than most gas blocks and will only just squeak under super lo-pro handguards, such as the Midwest Industries SSK — regular 2-inch-diameter free-float tubes are just fine.

**MAKE:**

Patriot Ordnance Factory USA

**MODEL:**

Dictator Adjustable Gas Block

**MSRP:**

\$180

**URL:**

[www.pof-usa.com](http://www.pof-usa.com)

10

PRIME Ammunition is importing the legendary Swiss P ammo line, but with a twist. Having convinced the notoriously conservative Swiss manufacturers to load for U.S. market preferences, the company now offers some of the most accurate factory ammo we've ever shot (think 0.27-inch, three-shot groups). .308 and 5.56 NATO loads are the first to launch, with .300 Win Mag and .338 Lapua in the pipeline. So if you need super-accurate Mil-spec ammo for training or social use, check out these offerings.

**MAKE:**

PRIME Ammunition

**MODEL:**

M117LR

**MSRP:**

\$40

**URL:**

[www.primeclub.com](http://www.primeclub.com)

11

The disadvantage of moisture-wicking clothes is that they're often made of polyester, which can sometimes feel like sandpaper and will melt when exposed to flames. Enter Under Armour's Freedom Long Sleeve Henley with Charged Cotton. It is super soft, dries about as fast as all other UA apparel, and has anti-odor technology that prevents the growth of stinky microbes. Plus, it's a good-looking, comfortable shirt. Aside from the fact that its advertised "black" color is more like a dark gray, this is a versatile top that you can wear at the pub, during a workout, or on the range.

**MAKE:**

Under Armour

**MODEL:**

Freedom Long Sleeve Henley

**MSRP:**

\$40

**URL:**

[www.underarmour.com](http://www.underarmour.com)

12

With radio-frequency identification (RFID) scanners, ID thieves can now swipe your info from credit cards and security badges without ever touching them. Fortunately, there are wallets like the Cache 2.0. Durable and double-stitched, it's made from 1,000-denier Cordura with a Teflon coating and RFID-blocking composite fabric to shield your personal data from both moisture and digital pick-pockets. It can fit up to 20 cards and a decent wad of cash. At 4 by 5.4 inches when closed, the wallet might seem too square-ish for your valuables, but because of a smart design it actually takes up less pocket space because it sits more flatly than a bi-fold leather wallet. After a brief break-in period to allow it to conform to its contents, the Cache 2.0 will serve as an exceptional 21st-century wallet. Available in black, coyote tan, MultiCam black, and wolf gray.

**MAKE:**

Vanquest Tough-Built Gear

**MODEL:**

Cache 2.0 RFID-Blocking Wallet

**MSRP:**

\$20

**URL:**

[www.vanquest.com](http://www.vanquest.com)

13

There's no secret that the stock sights on a Glock are about as helpful as sunglasses on a bat. So former Delta operator Kyle Lamb and his crew at Viking Tactics have recently released new sights for lovers of the Tupperware pistol. Both front and rear sights feature fiber-optic tubes for quick sight acquisition in daylight and glow-in-the-dark tritium vials for low-light situations. Plus, the front sight is tapered to 0.11 inches at the top. They're compatible with all Glocks (though note that Viking Tactics said they're made for point of aim, point of impact at 15 yards). Also available are steel front and rear sights (shown) for \$65.

**MAKE:**

Viking Tactics

**MODEL:**

Glock Sights (Fiber Front/Fiber Rear)

**MSRP:**

\$175

**URL:**

[www.vikingtactics.com](http://www.vikingtactics.com)



13



10



12



9



# 14

So you got yourself a spiffy new G43, but just can't bring yourself to break out the soldering iron. Yet. The base pistol can still benefit from a more aggressive texture, however, especially if it's riding on your hip every day. Instead of changing your gun's grip permanently, you might want to try Talon's ultra-sticky, laser-cut panels and who knows, that soldering iron might instead get used for oh, we don't know, soldering maybe?

## MAKE:

Talon Grips

## MODEL:

Glock 43 Grip

## MSRP:

\$18

## URL:

[www.talongungrrips.com](http://www.talongungrrips.com)

# 15

The original FLIR ONE brought thermal imaging to the masses. Suddenly, home energy audits, pheasant stalking, and fart measuring were all within reach. But, only for those with an iPhone 5. The updated FLIR ONE is out and it's no longer a phone case design, and it's no longer limited to the iOS platform. At press time, FLIR released one version that snaps to the bottom of any Lightning port-equipped iPhone and promises another version for micro USB-equipped Android phones should hit the street by the time you read this. Aside from the new shape, the update includes a higher resolution sensor with four times more resolution than the original, and a price that's \$100 lower than the original FLIR ONE at \$350. Most important, though, FLIR's opened up the platform to application developers. This means you should see apps that combine FLIR's thermal capabilities with the processing power of your smartphone, making the FLIR ONE more of a tool and less of a novelty.

## MAKE:

FLIR

## MODEL:

ONE

## MSRP:

\$250

## URL:

[www.flir.com](http://www.flir.com)

# 16

Ever get the urge to abuse a mismanaged government-enforced monopoly? Get yourself one of RSR's Ready Ship Targets and take advantage of their cunning packaging to stuff not only a 3/8-inch-thick AR500 plate, but also a hanger and target stand into a USPS flat rate box. It's a scaled-down BCC-sized target that's rated to withstand 5.56 NATO at 100 yards and is good value, considering the target stand that comes with it will also accept wooden furring strips to hang paper targets from.

## MAKE:

Renaissance Steel Research

## MODEL:

Ready Ship Target

## MSRP:

\$170

## URL:

[www.rsrsteeltargets.com](http://www.rsrsteeltargets.com)

# 17

Steve Fisher of Sentinel Concepts asked American Kami to make a couple of knives. If you've met the Yeti, you know that you listen to the Yeti. (If you haven't met him, just take our word for it.) Fisher wanted one knife that works as an everyday fixed-blade problem solver while serving as a combative's companion with things like an exposed pommel and spine hook that can be used for pain compliance and joint manipulation. The result is the M80. It's based on the American Kami Colubris design and is 9.75 inches with a 5-inch reinforced tanto blade. The second knife in the collaboration, the GITFO-DA was designed as a concealable, in-extremis blade that packs combatives features, such as the beak on the finger ring, again great for pain compliance. The GITFO-DA is 5.2-inches overall with a 2.25-inch blade. It's an alternative to larger blades that get left at home because, for one reason or another, they are a hassle to carry. Both blades are made from stout 0.1875-inch CPM S35VN steel and come with sheaths set up for IWB carry.

## MAKE:

American Kami

## MODEL:

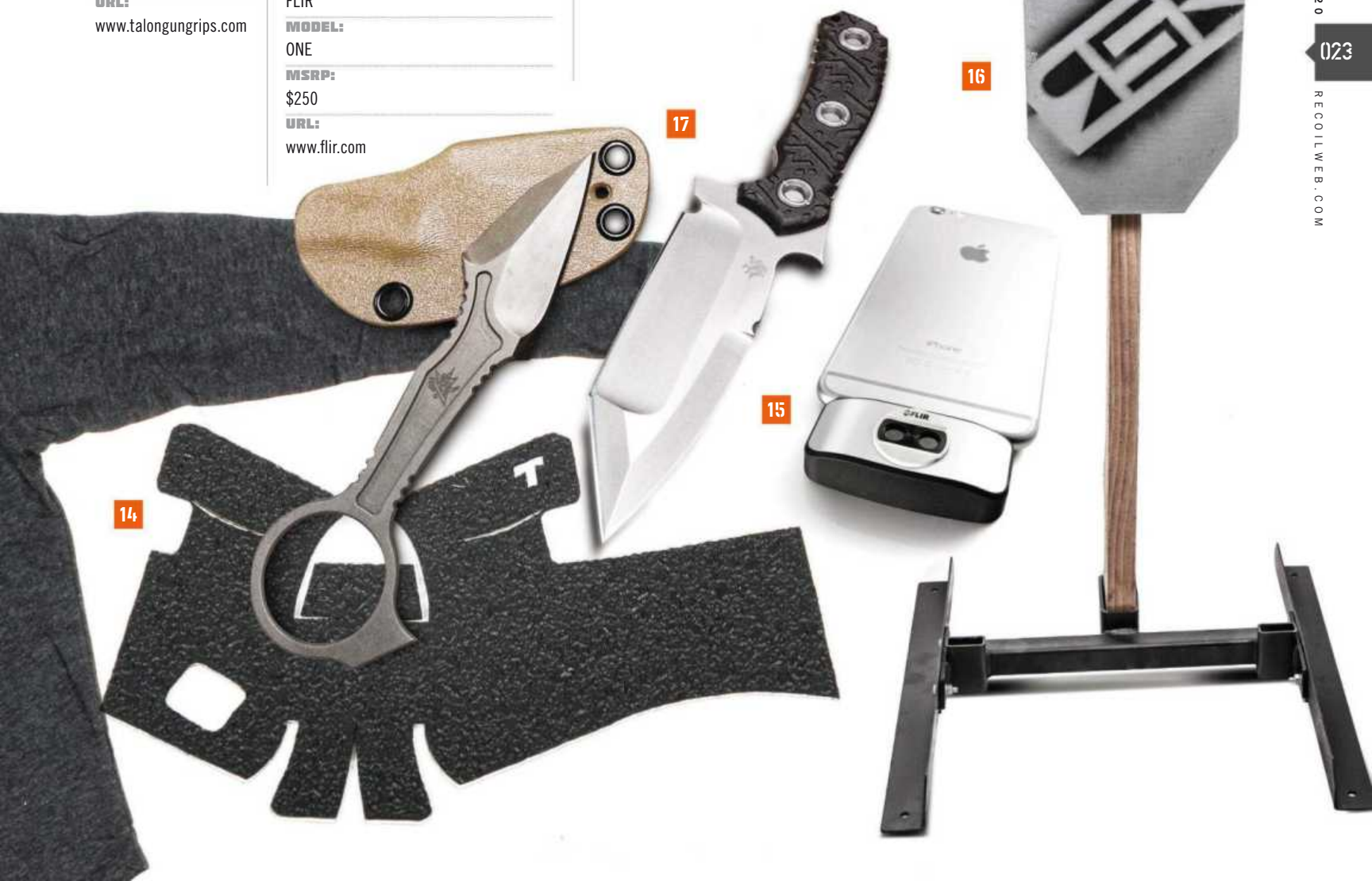
M80 and GITFO-DA

## MSRP:

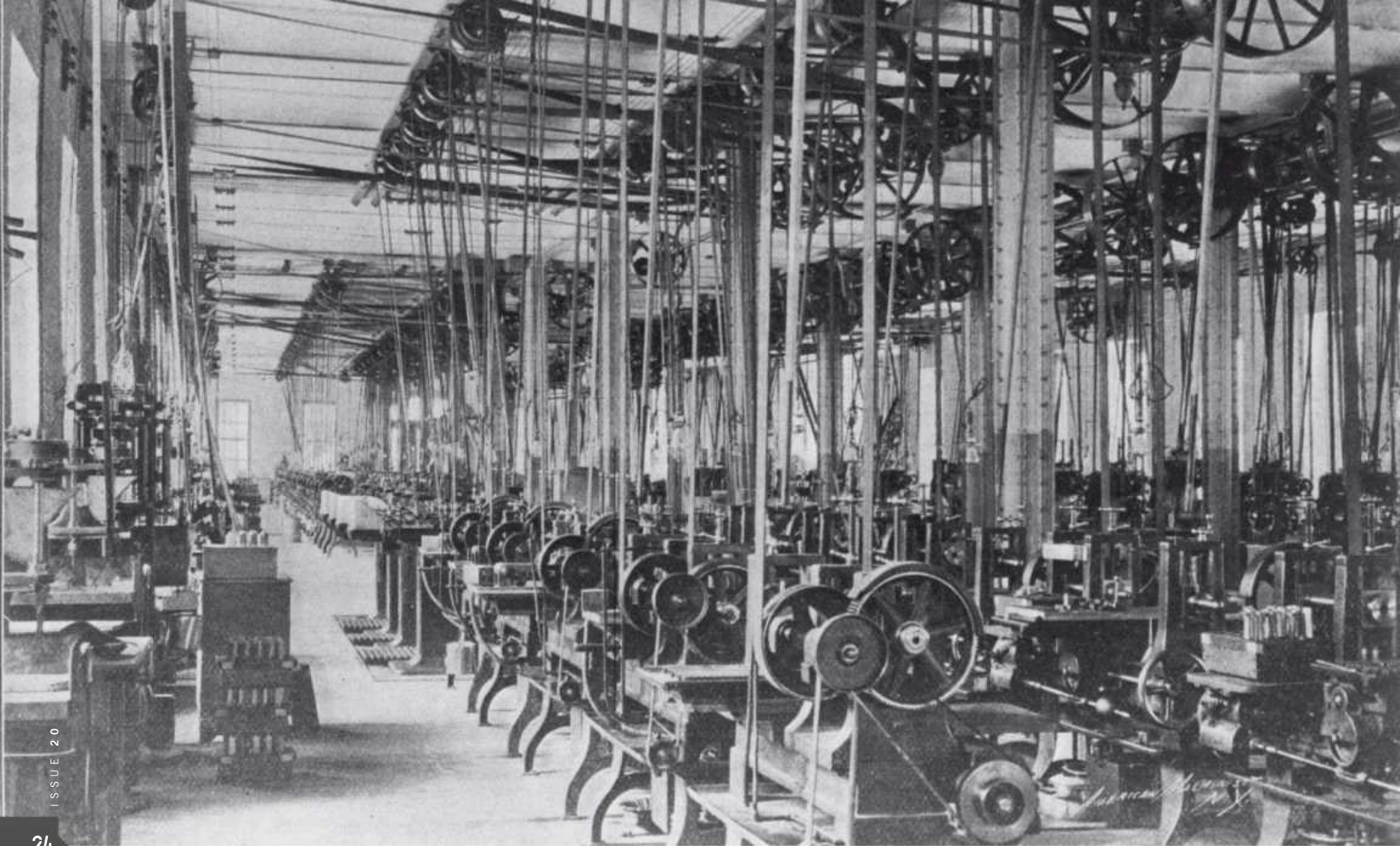
\$479 and \$219

## URL:

[www.americankami.com](http://www.americankami.com)







# WELCOME TO THE ROCK

## A VISIT TO THE ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL MUSEUM

BY PETER SUCIU

Top: Building 60 Shop A as it looked prior to World War I. Here is where parts for the Model 1903 Springfield were produced. Today this room is home to the Rock Island Arsenal Museum.

Right: One of several of the larger guns in the collection. While not a cannon or heavy weapons museum, there are several notable pieces in the collection.

Of all the places in the United States to find what is perhaps the best collection of small arms, the state of Illinois doesn't likely spring to mind. Chicago, the state's largest city, has some of the strictest laws on gun ownership, while all Illinois residents must have a firearm owner's identification card to purchase a firearm.

Yet, the land of Lincoln is also home to one of the finest collections of military small arms anywhere in the world. This collection is housed at the Rock Island Arsenal, a 946-acre island located on

the Mississippi River between the cities of Rock Island, Illinois, and Davenport, Iowa. The island was first established as a government site in 1816 with the construction of Fort Armstrong, which was one of a chain of western frontier defenses erected after the War of 1812. Built with stone and timber, the fort was used as the U.S. Army headquarters during the Black Hawk War. Today a replica of the original fort still overlooks the "Mighty Mississippi." The island was then later used as a prisoner-of-war camp during the American Civil War and

today remains the final resting place for nearly 2,000 Confederate prisoners.

It was after the Civil War that the island became home to the Rock Island Arsenal, the largest government-owned weapons manufacturing armory in the United States. Since the 1880s the Rock Island Arsenal has been used to produce military equipment and







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A collection of World War II-era weapons, including an M1 Garand Sniper Rifle (top), an M1 Garand, a Browning Automatic Rifle, and a water-cooled Browning .30-caliber machine gun.

ordnance, and it was here that in 1919 to 1920 some 100 Anglo-American designed Liberty Mark VIII tanks were manufactured. These were intended for use in the First World War, but as the conflict had ended they were never used in combat. However, they remained as the first American-made tanks in history.

The arsenal — which is the only active U.S. Army foundry in the country — continues to manufacture ordnance and this includes artillery pieces, gun mounts, grenade launchers, and even weapon simulators.

### IT STARTED WITH 15

Established on July 4, 1905, Rock Island is actually the second-oldest U.S. Army museum in the country after the West Point Museum. This one was created in part by efforts of Chief of Ordnance Major General William Crozier, who supplied 15 boxes of ordnance for “the purpose of preserving it in a military museum to be established at the Rock Island Arsenal.” From those 15 boxes the museum’s collection has grown considerably!

“There are about 12,000 pieces in the collection, but just a fraction of it is on display,” says Kris Gayman Leinicke, director of the Rock Island Arsenal Museum. “However, about 70 percent of the firearms we own are now out on display.”

The result is a wall and a half of small arms dating back to the American Revolution and showcasing the evolution of firearms technology through the last 240 years. Special attention was paid to firearms that were actually produced on the island, including the Springfield 1903 .30-caliber bolt-action rifle and

the “Brunton Bump,” which allowed southpaws to fire an M16/M4 without having the shell casing fly into his face.

“This deflector for left-handed shooters was designed here,” Leinicke says. “Mr. Loren H. Brunton of the small arms branch at the Rock Island Arsenal actually holds two patents for the design of this feature.”

There is much history in the building that houses the museum, and in fact the present location of the Rock Island Arsenal Museum in Building 60 was once home to the Model 1903 receiver department located in Shop B. Some of



A collection of modern black guns from around the world, including the Israeli Uzi and German H&K MP5.





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Even Saddam Hussein didn't have a gold-plated M60, but the museum has one in its collection.



the same firearms that were produced in the shop are now on the walls. This includes a Model 1903 rifle with serial No. 1. According to the museum records, this firearm was sent to the museum on December 20, 1904 — yet features a 1905 date on the stock. The reason for this seemingly contradictory dating is that the rifle, which is marked

with a “CN/1905” cartouche, was inspected in the fiscal year 1905 by a Conrad Nelson. Thus this is just one of several notable pieces in the collection.

#### GOLD-PLATED MACHINE GUN

The Rock Island Arsenal Museum also has three of only six known Pederson Devices — officially known as the

“Automatic Pistol, Caliber .30 Model of 1918;” these were developed in secret to convert the Model 1903 Springfield into a semi-automatic rifle that fired pistol cartridges. Not only does the museum possess three of these rare devices, it's worth noting it has several boxes of the ammunition as well.

Other significant pieces today include

#### ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL MUSEUM

##### ADDRESS:

1 Rock Island Arsenal Building 60  
Rock Island, IL  
61299-5000

##### HOURS:

Noon to 4 p.m.,  
Tuesday to Saturday  
(closed on Sundays,  
Mondays, federal  
holidays, and  
the days after  
Thanksgiving and  
Christmas Eve)

##### ADMISSION:

Free

##### URL:

[www.arsenalhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.arsenalhistoricalsociety.org)

The collection is truly diverse and includes M79 “Bloofer” grenade launchers (left), various German World War II small arms, including the first true “assault rifle” (the StG44) as well as the German FG-42 paratrooper rifle and several variations of the British Sten Gun (right).





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a collection of M15 General Officer's Pistols, which were produced at the Rock Island Arsenal from 1972 to 1974. In total only 1,004 of these were made, rebuilt from Model 1911A1 pistols that were produced at the arsenal. The collection also includes a prototype Model 1919 submachine gun, which was developed by General John T. Thompson and would go on to become the Thompson Submachine Gun.

While the arsenal and the museum predate the modern black gun that is popular with shooters today, it's closely tied with these firearms. In addition to the aforementioned "Brunton Bump," the museum features a section dedicated to the M16 and its subsequent variations, including an early 1965 model that was manufactured by Colt. This example also features the 40mm XM148 grenade launcher. The collection features numerous M16s and variations, as well as M79 grenade launchers,

Top left: A wall of small arms of various models.

Top right: A display chronicling the evolution of the M9 sidearm.



versions of the Mac 10/11, and even many captured communist bloc weapons including AK-47s and its variants.

Perhaps the most striking firearm in the collection is a gold-plated M60 machine gun that marked the end of the firearm's production. It's made of

unserviceable parts and thus is one of the firearms in the collection that couldn't actually fire. "It is a favorite of our visitors," Leinicke says. "We had it off the floor and people kept asking to see it. It is just one of several guns that you can't see anywhere else." **R**



A number of the AR-15/M16 variations in the museum's collection.



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In RECOIL Issue 19, we profiled John Wayne Walding, a decorated Green Beret nearly killed in the Battle of Shok Valley who also became the first amputee to complete Special Forces sniper school. While his commitment to his country and the Army speaks for itself, honoring an individual like Walding with a vehicle to commemorate his service and approach to life is no easy feat. First, you need the right concept. Second, you need the right materials. And last but not least, you need the right builders to combine all these elements into something practical, personal, and robust enough to make other Special Forces operators say, "Hey, I'd drive that."

Mark Hanson, CEO of Road Armor, first began conceptualizing a truck along those lines with his friend, the legendary SEAL sniper

Chris Kyle. The reason being, when special operation forces (SOF) personnel retire after getting to use some of the most sophisticated technology on the planet, buying an off-the-lot car or truck isn't exactly a lateral move. Since so many in the SOF community continue work in a similar arena after their military service, it only makes sense that their means of transportation speaks to that lifestyle. Initially, Kyle's Ford longbed F-350 was to serve as the platform for this brainchild... then the unimaginable happened.

Kyle's sudden death put the brakes on the project, but Hanson didn't give up hope. Walding was also a friend of Kyle, had a similar truck that Hanson knew about, and felt he'd be someone Kyle would've wanted to see this project come to life with. It was only a matter of time before Walding and Hanson teamed up to turn his 2011 F-250 Super Duty into what he'd previously envisioned. "He carries stuff in his truck that's part of his daily life," Hanson says. "Anything you'd need at the range can be put in that truck."

## 1 BALLISTIC ARMOR

**MAKE:**

Custom

**MODEL:**

Levell IIIA

## 2 ROLL CAGE

**MAKE:**

Custom

**MODEL:**

2-inch, 120-wall tubing

**URL:**

[www.hunteroffroad.com](http://www.hunteroffroad.com)

## 3 COMBO LIGHT

**MAKE:**

Rigid Industries

**MODEL:**

10-inch E Series white/16 light prototype

**URL:**

[www.rigidindustries.com](http://www.rigidindustries.com)

## 4 COMBO LIGHT

**MAKE:**

Rigid Industries

**MODEL:**

P-16 LED light

**URL:**

[www.rigidindustries.com](http://www.rigidindustries.com)

## 5 TIRES

**MAKE:**

Comp

**MODEL:**

Xterrain 37x14x16

**URL:**

[www.procompusa.com](http://www.procompusa.com)

## 6 WHEELS

**MAKE:**

Eagle

**MODEL:**

Aluminum 16x8

**URL:**

[www.aewheel.com](http://www.aewheel.com)





## 1 IR LIGHTS

**MAKE:**  
Rigid Industries  
**MODEL:**  
4-inch IR LED Lights  
**URL:**  
www.rigidindustries.com

## 2 WINCH

**MAKE:**  
Warn  
**MODEL:**  
16.5ti  
**URL:**  
www.warn.com

## 3 BUMPER

**MAKE:**  
Road Armor  
**MODEL:**  
Ford Super Duty Front Stealth Winch Bumper With Pre-Runner Guard  
**URL:**  
www.roadarmor.com

## 4 LOWER LIGHT BAR

**MAKE:**  
Rigid Industries  
**MODEL:**  
20-inch Single-Row LED Light  
**URL:**  
www.rigidindustries.com

## 5 GRILLE

**MAKE:**  
Rigid Industries  
**MODEL:**  
Super Duty LED Grille  
**URL:**  
www.rigidindustries.com

## 6 BUMPER LIGHTS

**MAKE:**  
Rigid Industries  
**MODEL:**  
D-Series LED Lights  
**URL:**  
www.rigidindustries.com

## 7 TIRES

**MAKE:**  
Toyo  
**MODEL:**  
Open Country 35x12.5xR20  
**URL:**  
www.toyotires.com

## 8 WHEELS

**MAKE:**  
BMF  
**MODEL:**  
Novakane  
**URL:**  
www.bmfwheels.com



## 9 FENDER FLARES

**MAKE:**  
Bushwacker  
**MODEL:**  
Pocket-Style Fender Flare  
**URL:**  
www.bushwacker.com

## 10 UPHOLSTERY

**MAKE:**  
Ferrari  
**MODEL:**  
458 leather with custom stitching  
**URL:**  
www.starwoodmotors.com

Aesthetically the truck is pretty inconspicuous from afar, but that's pretty apropos for the quiet professional who drives it. The entire body has been coated in a Kevlar-based lining by Starwood Motors. It can spend a day at the range getting filthy and all it needs is a good pressure wash. No fading, no waxing necessary, and it's lifetime guaranteed. The Road Armor custom bumpers and fender flares were Kryptek coated, a pattern popular with operators. In the back you'll find an ARB air compressor and Gun Vault for Walding to store his gear. The DiamondBack truck cover keeps everything sealed up and is strong enough to support the weight of two quads.

The 6.7L diesel has been upgraded with a Spartan tuner, Airaid intake, AirDog fuel system, and exhales through a large-diameter Magnaflow exhaust. A 4-inch Pro Comp lift accommodates the large BMF Novakane wheels and Toyo meats. Up front you'll find a variety of Rigid Industries LED

## YOU ARE WHAT YOU DRIVE

and IR lights as well as a Rigid custom grille and Warn 16.5ti winch.

Starwood Motors used Ferrari 458 leather on the seats, the headrests of which are embroidered with Walding's company logo on one side — 5 Toes Custom — and the Green Beret insignia on the other. And since duty is nothing without honor, the center armrest has also been stitched with names of the fallen soldiers Walding served with. "These guys made an impact on John to live his life better," Hanson says. "I owe it to the fallen to live well; to be a father, but a good father. To be a husband, but a good husband," Walding says. A Gunner Fab pistol mount resides on the driver side door — carjackers, you've been warned.

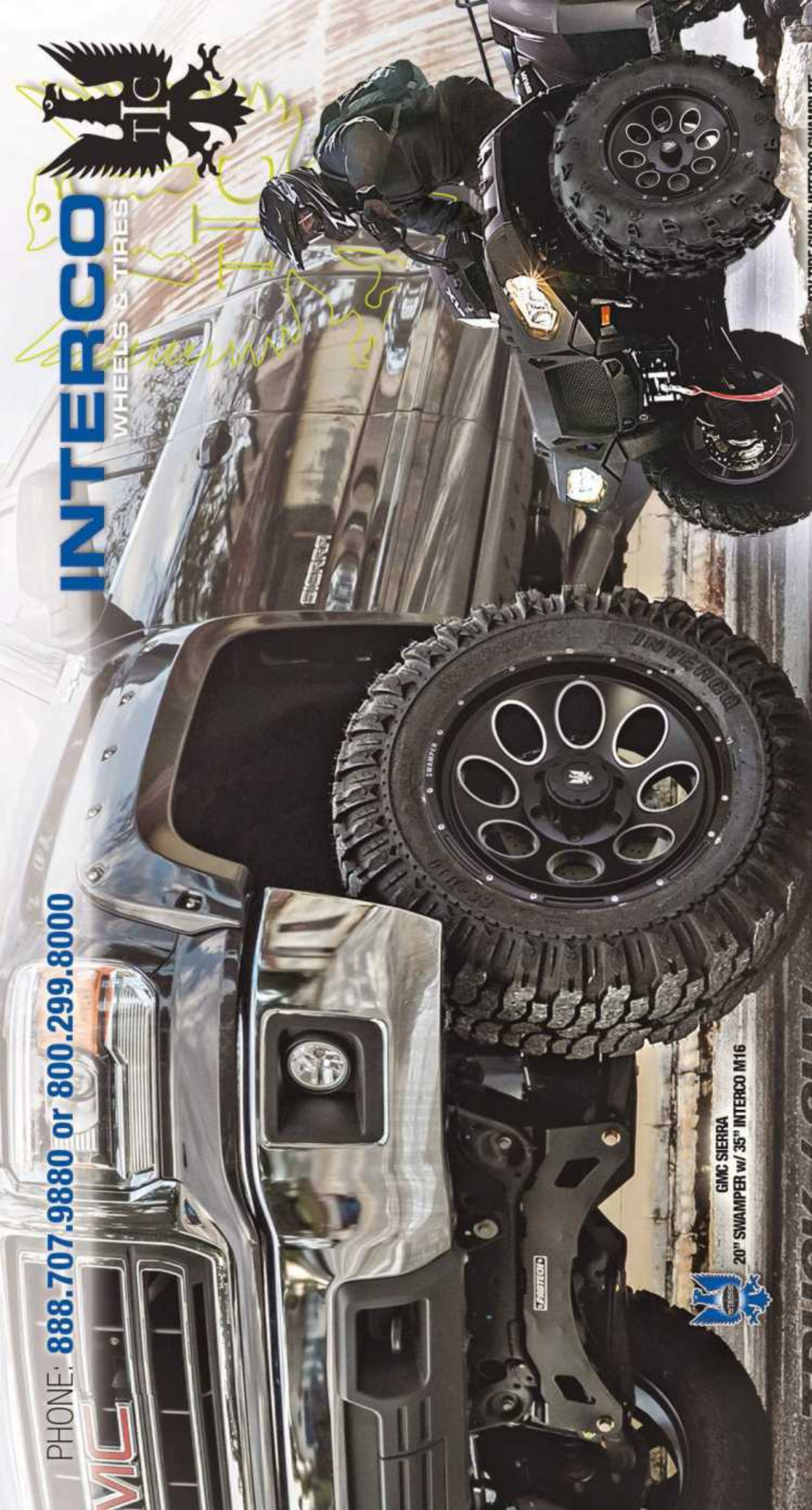
Delivery of the finished product to Walding was carried out by Hanson and Chris Kyle's brother Jeff. The official send-off was caught on camera, and was an emotional affair on many levels. "It gave me some closure about Chris," Hanson says. "We were about



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SATIN BLACK MACHINED  
17x9, 20x9, 20x10

SATIN BLACK  
17x9, 20x9, 20x10



SATIN BLACK MACHINED  
12x7, 14x7, 17x7

SATIN BLACK  
12x7, 14x7, 17x7

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**1 RIFLE****MAKE:**

5 Toes Custom

**MODEL:**

5.56 16-inch with 1-8.5x34mm Bushnell Elite optic, AR Gold trigger

**URL:**

www.5toescustom.com  
www.bushnell.com  
www.americantrigger.com

**2 RIFLE****MAKE:**

5 Toes Custom

**MODEL:**

5TC .308 LRPR (long-range precision rifle) Remington 700 trued; Proof Research carbon-fiber barrel; Remington RACS chassis; Jewell trigger

**URL:**

www.5toescustom.com  
www.proofresearch.com  
www.remington.com  
www.brownells.com

**3 RIFLE****MAKE:**

5 Toes Custom

**MODEL:**

.308 Come and Take It; 5TC D.O.L. Action; Obermeyer barrel; Manners T6A stock; Jewell trigger

**URL:**

www.5toescustom.com  
www.obermeyerbarrels.com  
www.mannersstocks.com  
www.brownells.com

**4 RIFLE****MAKE:**

Daniel Defense

**MODEL:**

M4 16-inch with Trijicon ACOG optic; Bravo Company OSS Bannar brake; AR Gold trigger

**URL:**

www.danieldefense.com  
www.trijicon.com  
www.bravocompanyusa.com  
www.americantrigger.com

**5 RIFLE****MAKE:**

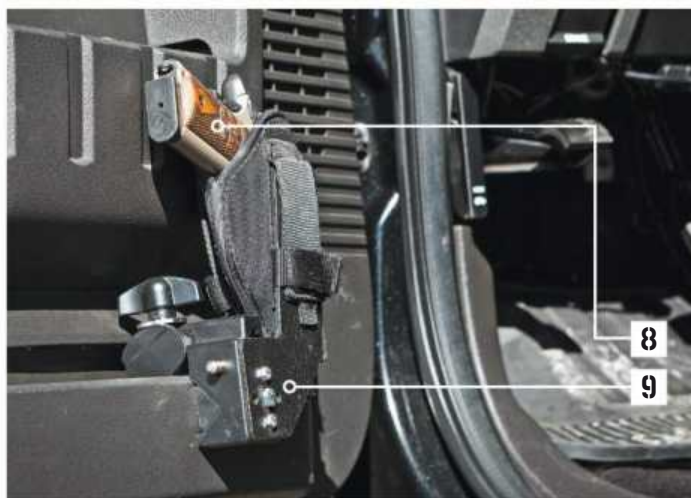
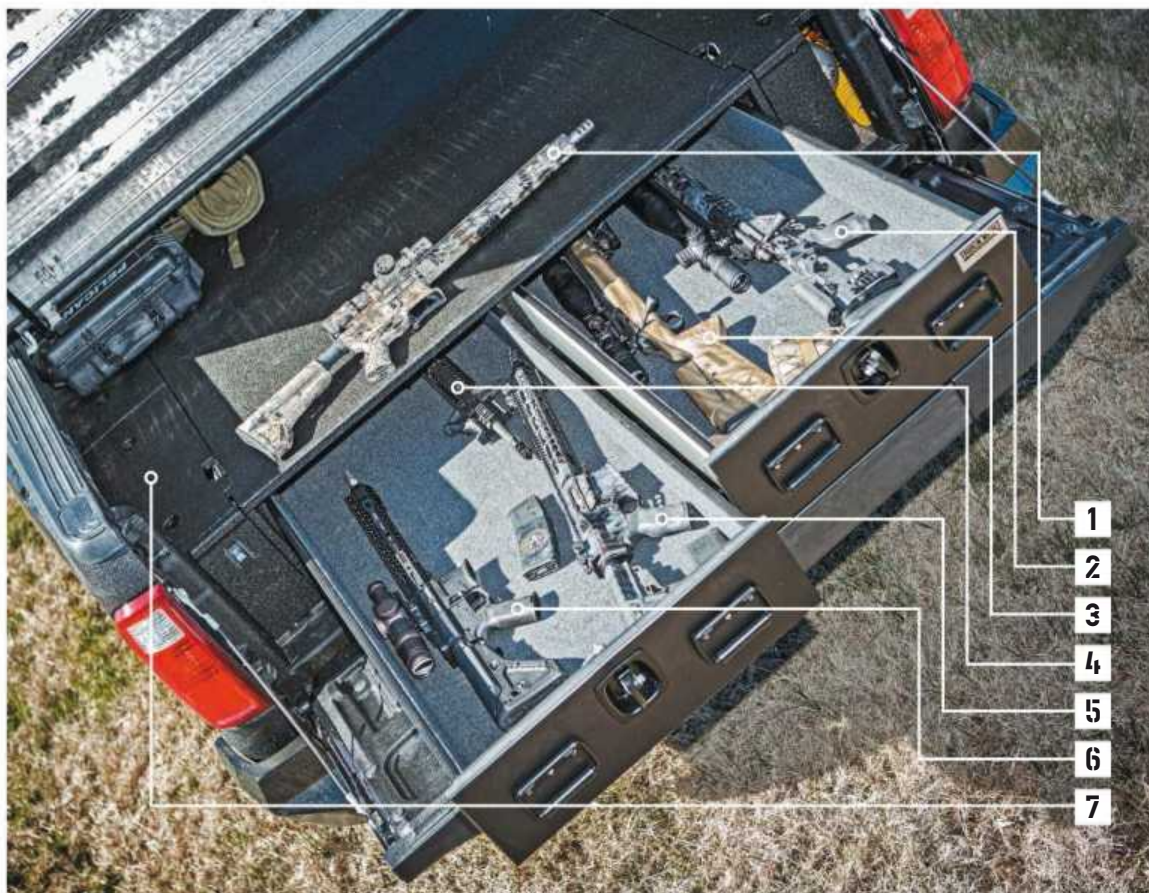
5 Toes Custom

**MODEL:**

.308 with 16-inch Proof Research carbon-fiber barrel; Bravo Company OSS Bannar brake; AR Gold trigger

**URL:**

www.5toescustom.com  
www.proofresearch.com  
www.bravocompanyusa.com  
www.americantrigger.com

**6 RIFLE****MAKE:**

5 Toes Custom

**MODEL:**

5.56 16-inch with Vortex 1-6x optic, CMC trigger

**URL:**

www.5toescustom.com  
www.vortexoptics.com  
www.cmctriggers.com

**7 STORAGE****MAKE:**

Truck Vault

**MODEL:**

Custom

**URL:**

www.truckvault.com

**8 PISTOL****MAKE:**

Kimber

**MODEL:**

Custom 1911 Desert Warrior .45

**URL:**

www.kimberamerica.com

**9 HOLSTER****MAKE:**

Gunner Fab

**MODEL:**

Pistol Clamp Mount CO-CLMP

**URL:**

www.conditionzeromounts.com

to start on Chris' truck when he was killed. We got to finish with someone who Chris knew and would have approved of. John was one of Chris' heroes."

"To me it represents what the special operators stand for; everything worth doing is worth overdoing," Walding says. "There were times in my life I've protected the American dream, but wasn't living it. I could never afford a truck like this and it's a way of receiving thanks. You never realize how much it means when people say thanks to a veteran." **R**



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Tanto, clip-point, spear-head — we're often asked, "What's the best blade shape?" To which we reply, "It depends on the purpose."

Like using a 12-gauge for long-range shooting, picking a knife for the wrong purpose could result in diminished performance at best and catastrophic results at worse. Invariably, the next question is always, "Then what's the best blade shape for self-defense?" Our first answer is the old saying, "The one you have in

your hand." Our follow-up answer is a bit more complex, because so many factors can affect a given confrontation (i.e. your training, your skill level, your environment, and the local knife laws, just to name just a few).

But if you ask Michael Janich, the answer is simple: a Wharncliffe. This preeminent combatives instructor, RECOIL contributor, and co-host of TV's *The Best Defense* is a huge advocate of this blade profile and has been instrumental in

popularizing tactical Wharncliffes over the past decade. To find out why, turn a couple of pages to his feature article "Getting It Straight." If you don't already need convincing, take a closer look at the models on these pages. We're certain you'll find at least one, if not several, that could serve as a no-nonsense self-defense tool. **R**

### 1 MAKE: HK Knives

**MODEL:** Plan D

**OAL:** 5.65 inches

**BLADE LENGTH:** 2.9 inches

**BLADE MATERIAL:** N680 stainless steel

**WEIGHT:** 2.37 ounces

**MSRP:** \$85

**URL:** [www.benchmade.com](http://www.benchmade.com)

### 4 MAKE: CRKT

**MODEL:** Swindle

**OAL:** 7.5 inches

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.2 inches

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 8Cr14Mov stainless steel

**WEIGHT:** 3.3 ounces

**MSRP:** \$60

**URL:** [www.crkt.com](http://www.crkt.com)

### 7 MAKE: Emerson Knives

**MODEL:** P-Sark

**OAL:** 8.2 inches

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.5 inches

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 154CM stainless steel

**WEIGHT:** 4.1 ounces

**MSRP:** \$210

**URL:** [www.emersonknives.com](http://www.emersonknives.com)

### 2 MAKE: Pinkerton Knives

**MODEL:** Wharning

**OAL:** 7 inches

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.5 inches

**BLADE MATERIAL:** S30V stainless steel

**WEIGHT:** 4.4 ounces

**MSRP:** \$225

**URL:** [www.dirkpinkerton.com](http://www.dirkpinkerton.com)

### 5 MAKE: Spyderco

**MODEL:** Yojimbo2

**OAL:** 7.55 inches

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.11 inches

**BLADE MATERIAL:** S30V stainless steel

**WEIGHT:** 4 ounces

**MSRP:** \$198

**URL:** [www.spyderco.com](http://www.spyderco.com)

### 3 MAKE: Boker Plus

**MODEL:** Mosier

**OAL:** 7.25 inches

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.25 inches

**BLADE MATERIAL:** 440C stainless steel

**WEIGHT:** 5.5 ounces

**MSRP:** \$108

**URL:** [www.boker.de/us](http://www.boker.de/us)

### 6 MAKE: BLACKHAWK!

**MODEL:** Be-Wharned

**OAL:** 7.85 inches

**BLADE LENGTH:** 3.4 inches

**BLADE MATERIAL:** AUS-8 stainless steel

**WEIGHT:** 4.2 ounces

**MSRP:** \$102

**URL:** [www.blackhawk.com](http://www.blackhawk.com)











# INTERROGATING THE UNUSUAL SUSPECTS

## HK KNIVES PLAN D



**411:** As one would come to expect from a collaboration between Benchmade and Heckler & Koch (HK), the Plan D is an outstanding piece of hardware that's well built and quite durable. Available in black or sand colors, the comfortable handle is made of Grivory (a polymer) with signature HK texture. Made in the USA with Austrian steel.

### PROS:

- ▶ A fixed blade means a faster draw and less chance of parts failure.
- ▶ The N680 blade steel, while not a premium steel, is practically rustproof.
- ▶ The low-profile sheath is ambidextrous and has a retention feature that prevents assailants from pulling your knife out.

### CONS:

- ▶ Its angled profile diminishes the Wharncliffe's biggest asset, its straight edge. The blade leads with its tip so you'll likely pierce before you slice, limiting it for certain applications. Because of its cant, it'd probably be better off with a different blade shape altogether.

## PINKERTON KNIVES WHARNING



**411:** The Wharning is Dirk Pinkerton's take on this classic blade profile, and the result is an effective and low-profile self-defense fixed blade. It's made in the USA, comes with a Kydex sheath, and is also available with a slightly shorter 6.5-inch overall length. Pinkerton can also do custom variations; prices will vary.

### PROS:

- ▶ Feels good in the hand, thanks to the G-10 scales and a subtle but smart handle design.
- ▶ The blade is made of S30V, an exceptional stainless steel.
- ▶ Jimping on the blade's spine provides good thumb traction without being abrasive.

### CONS:

- ▶ Those with gorilla hands might not find enough purchase on the handle.
- ▶ Save up your pennies, folks; this one's not cheap at two-and-a-quarter bills. (But you do get what you pay for.)

## ROKER PLUS MOSIER



**411:** Custom knife-maker David Mosier's namesake features a modified Wharncliffe profile that has a minor upward cutting edge to increase versatility as an everyday-carry (EDC) tool. Its handle is contoured and has a two-tone gray aesthetic to add more flare to your kit. It comes with a Kydex sheath and a belt attachment.

### PROS:

- ▶ Quality construction, through and through.
- ▶ The G-10 scales on the handle make operating the Mosier quite secure and comfy.
- ▶ Though it won't bowl over anyone, 440C is a classic and reliable stainless steel that cuts well, sharpens easily, and fends off rust.

### CONS:

- ▶ Aside from looking like wallpaper in a bad acid trip, the two-tone handle won't win over users who prefer low-visibility EDC knives.
- ▶ The stock belt attachment feels chintzy, causing us to wonder how long it'll last. (A Tek-Lok belt attachment is sold separately, though.)

## CRKT SWINDLE



**411:** The Swindle features a frame lock, a flipper tab, and a modified Wharncliffe blade that help keep this folder slim. Designed by famed knife-maker Ken Onion, it has a tension lever on the tail end that acts as a pocket clip. Also available is a low-visibility handle without the intricate grooves for those who prefer to run slick.

### PROS:

- ▶ Simple, elegant aesthetics.
- ▶ The IKBS pivot system makes the opening swift and smooth.
- ▶ Despite being made in China, the 8Cr14Mov blade cuts decently and helps keep the price down.
- ▶ Speaking of which, for 60 bucks, you're getting a lot of bang for your buck.

### CONS:

- ▶ The IKBS pivot doesn't offer much resistance when closing the knife, so be careful not to let the blade drop on your thumb.
- ▶ The tension lever is a cool idea, but it also makes the knife sit diagonally rather than flat when clipped to your pants, making a slim frame feel fat in your pocket.

## SPYDERCO YOJIMBO2



**411:** This is the latest specimen in Janich's evolution of Wharncliffe folders, based on realistic cutting tests, medical research on knife wounds, and refinement of his Martial Blade Concepts system. Made with stellar materials and a compression lock, the Yojimbo2 is among the upper echelon of self-defense knives.

### PROS:

- ▶ It stabs like a spear and slices like a chef's knife.
- ▶ The contoured thumb ramp is great for those who prefer the Filipino martial arts grip.
- ▶ Though mildly reminiscent of batwings, the G-10 scales feel secure in hand and ridiculously comfortable.

### CONS:

- ▶ Because of the blade height, it sucks up a lot of pocket real estate.
- ▶ It's certainly an investment at almost 200 bucks.

## BLACKHAWK! BE-WHARNED



**411:** This was designed by Janich when he worked for BLACKHAWK! some years back, and it still sells well due to its forward-thinking design and fighting effectiveness. It features a liner-lock and ambidextrous thumb-studs. "Punny" name aside, the Be-Wharned is a serious self-defense tool.

### PROS:

- ▶ The tapered handle helps prevent your hand from slipping onto the blade when stabbing into something sturdy.
- ▶ The AUS-8 steel cuts beautifully for a mid-level stainless. (It's labeled as AUS-8A, but that's the same thing as AUS-8.)
- ▶ Smooth opening and closing of the blade.

### CONS:

- ▶ At first glance, it's hard to nitpick the Be-Wharned — until you start comparing it to its younger, sleeker brother from another mother, the Spyderco Yojimbo2. Knife snobs will notice the cheaper materials, as well as the subtle design and construction differences.

## EMERSON KNIVES P-SARK



**411:** Emerson Knives built its reputation by making hardcore blades for U.S. Navy SEALs, and the P-Sark lives up to that pedigree. Based on the Sark (an emergency tool for Navy rescue teams), the P-Sark has a modified Wharncliffe with an aggressive tip. Made in the USA and available in various configurations.

### PROS:

- ▶ The blade's 154CM is a badass steel: tough, laser sharp, and rust resistant.
- ▶ Emerson's "wave-shaped" opening feature allows for a lightning-fast draw because it opens the blade as you draw.
- ▶ Comfortable and durable G-10 scales.
- ▶ High-quality construction.

### CONS:

- ▶ For the budget-minded, the P-Sark could take a bite out of your wallet at \$210.
- ▶ Despite being lightweight, it's by no means a compact folder; it'll be noticeable in your pocket.





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# GETTING IT STRAIGHT

## WARNING!

The concepts shown here are for illustrative purposes only. Seek professional training or instruction before attempting any techniques discussed or shown in this story.

## A CQB EXPERT MAKES A CASE FOR THE WHARNCLIFFE BLADE

BY MICHAEL JANICH

Using a knife in self-defense is simple: All you need to do is cut and/or puncture your attacker in ways that make him stop trying to kill or maim you. Sure, any cut or hole might persuade him to stop attacking, but real stopping power is based on creating profound physiological effects that make him physically incapable of continuing. And with that pleasant thought in mind, it makes sense that the more effectively your knife cuts and pierces, the better your chances are of seeing the next sunrise.

As painfully obvious as this may seem, arguments over the “best” fighting knife design continue to rage on — usually fueled more by regurgitated myths and misinformation than actual cutting tests or scientific





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processes. While staunch advocates of tantos, hawkbills, Bowies, daggers, and every other conceivable blade profile spew their “knowledge” with the hopes of attracting converts, knife-making technology continues to evolve, resulting in new blade designs that are weirder, more complicated, and more ludicrous than ever.

So what's the answer? For me, it's the Wharnccliffe blade. Why? Like most things in life, it comes down to focusing on the basics.

## CUT TO THE CHASE

The basic mechanical functions of a knife are cutting and puncturing. For a fighting knife, a blade profile that performs those functions most efficiently in the target medium (i.e. flesh) would logically be the best choice. Unfortunately, this is where myth and conventional wisdom get in the way of true understanding.

When most people think of a reference for cutting flesh, they think of field dressing game. Typically the accepted tool for that task is a skinning knife with a sweeping curve to the edge and plenty of “belly.” The reasoning for this design is that a curve packs more cutting edge into a given blade length than a straight edge. While that's technically true, the real advantage of the curve is control — specifically, control over the depth of the cut when working with game.

The human arm is composed of joints, so most movements of the arm have a natural arc to them — especially at the terminus of the arm, the hand. When the hand holds a knife, the curve of the knife's belly and the radius of the hand's motion run on parallel or near-parallel arcs. Because the edge curves away from the material being cut, it's very difficult to apply a lot of pressure — especially as the cutting arc approaches the point of the blade. For processing game this is excellent because it helps the hunter

avoid cutting entrails, puncturing the hide, or otherwise cutting too deeply. In simple terms, a blade with lots of belly makes it harder to cut deeply.

Tanto blades — or more accurately the Americanized tantos pioneered by the late custom knife-maker Bob Lum — have similar disadvantages. Their radically angled points (adapted from the kissaki tip of the Japanese katana) run parallel to the motion of the arm. While the straighter primary edge does cut efficiently, as soon as the upward slope of the point is reached the blade no longer applies significant pressure into the target.

At the other end of the curved-blades-have-more-edge spectrum is the hawkbill. As the name implies, it resembles the beak of a raptor and is sharpened on the concave inner edge. As the blade point punctures like the claw of an animal, the edge slices through the flesh, pulling it toward the lowest part of the edge as it cuts from

Imagine both of these knives traveling the same arc. Which one will cut deeper? The one that continues to apply pressure all the way to the point.

the inside out. Hawkbills cut very effectively and in many ways combine the actions of thrusting and cutting into one. The down side is that the hooked shape makes it prone to snagging — especially on bones. Shorter blades with less pronounced curvature are less likely to snag, but they are shorter and therefore offer less potential cutting depth. Hawkbill blades also don't work well with thrust-oriented knife tactics.

## CUTTING MECHANICS

The most efficient cutting operation with a knife involves two simultaneous actions: drawing the length of the edge through the target and applying pressure into the target as you do so. The drawing action allows the edge, which is for all practical purposes a microscopic saw, to tear through the tissue. Constant pressure of the edge into the target maximizes the effect of the sawing action and



From 5-pound pork roast and hardware store goods into the infamous Pork Man test fixture. This cutting target realistically replicates the lower leg of an average man — one of the most effective man-stopping knife targets.







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ensures that the edge continues to cut deeper as the tissue parts. For maximum effectiveness, the cutting action should start at the “heel” of the blade (the portion closest to the handle) and use the entire length of the edge as constant pressure is applied into the target. If, for whatever reason, the cut cannot be initiated with the heel of the edge, the cutting mechanics should remain constant with the portion of the edge that does contact the target.

What type of blade profile achieves this perfect cut? Believe it or not, a

Test Cut 1: Pork Man's wood dowel clamped in a Workmate and stabilized with a hand. All cuts were ballistic, made with moderate effort, and with equal force. The cut with the Benchmade Adamas' 3.7-inch blade was clean...but it did not hit “bone.” The drop-point's belly limited the cut to 1.5 inches deep.



In fact, the swords of many warrior cultures — including the Japanese samurai — began as straight-edged blades and evolved to curved blades primarily with the introduction of horse-mounted warfare. When swung from a moving horse, straight blades dump all their energy into the target and transfer that force, often destructively, back into the rider's arm. Curved blades, however, reduce the energy transfer, create more of a slicing cut, and reduce

stress on the horseman's arm.

### GET THE POINT

As noted earlier, a good defensive knife should be well suited to both cutting and thrusting. Although sheepfoot blades offer the super-efficient cutting edge, their blunt points are poorly suited to thrusting. If, however, the spine of the blade tapers gradually to meet the straight edge, the result is a sharp, very acute point and the best of both

simple, perfectly straight edge. Box cutters and utility knives have straight edges and cut with full power all the way to the point. Sheepfoot blades like those found on traditional electrician's and sailor's knives work the same way.

Right about now, most die-hard advocates of Bowies, karambits, and recurve tantos are saying, “Well, if straight edges are so great, why weren't they used on other combat-oriented knives?” In fact, they were. The seax or scramasax (literally “wounding knife”) for which the Saxons were named was basically a straight-edged knife. The Filipino ginunting and kampilan swords were also straight edged or nearly so.

Test Cut 2: The 3.4-inch blade of a BLACKHAWK! Be-Wharned, produced a 7-inch-long cut in the meat that was all the way to the “bone” — a depth of 1.88 inches.





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worlds. This style of blade is called a Wharncliffe and, as the story goes, gets its name from the British Lord Wharncliffe, patron of Joseph Rodgers & Sons cutlery company in Sheffield during the early 1800s. He wanted a pocketknife with a stout blade, true cutting power, and an acute point, and therefore commissioned the first “Wharncliffe” blade around 1832.

Original Wharncliffe blades were full-flat-ground and had a rounded spine that tapered to the point. The pattern

Test Cut 3: Small knife, big cut. Although its blade is only 1.4 inches long, Perrin's Shark cuts with serious authority. It produced a 3.88-inch-long cut at a depth of 1 inch.



# CHOOSING A PERSONAL-DEFENSE KNIFE

## AN 8-STEP RECIPE FOR EDC SUCCESS

What's the best personal-defense knife? I get this question a lot, and although there are a few knives that come close to a one-size-fits-all, near-perfect solution, the real answer is not a “what” but a “how.” Like any other weapon choice, many factors can (and should) affect your decision. The following step-by-step process, however, is a good place to start.

**1. Research the Law:** Knife laws vary wildly sometimes with state and local jurisdictions contradicting each other. Since you're the good guy, you need to play by the rules and research the laws before you buy. If you travel frequently, research all the applicable laws for all your stomping grounds and do your best to define your personal carry-everywhere knife.

**2. Fixed or Folder:** If you're lucky enough to live and travel where both folding knives and fixed blades are allowed, you'll need to choose one or the other. Fixed blades are stronger and easier to deploy, but are less

convenient and less socially friendly than folders.

**3. Blade Style:** Avoid the hype and bullshit and focus on simple blade designs that cut and puncture well — especially with the length of blade you're legally allowed to carry.

**4. Lock Mechanism:** If you're like most people, you'll probably end up carrying some type of folding knife. Make sure it has a stout, reliable lock strong enough for thrusting. Remember that the lock mechanism and the leverage it applies also affect how easily the blade opens.

**5. Deployment Options:** Getting a folding knife into action quickly requires skill and practice. Well-designed knives with one-hand opening features like blade holes, thumb studs, or disks make that a lot easier. Good assisted-openers and knives with the Emerson wave-shaped feature are also good options. Automatics, while tons of fun, can actually be slower

than conventional folders because releasing the safety and finding the firing button are complex motor skills.

**6. Carry Options:** When you need a personal-defense knife, you really need it, so it must be instantly accessible and easily drawn with one hand. The carry method should also present the knife so it can be immediately opened with little or no additional manipulation required. Pocket clips do all this best, especially when they offer multiple carry options.

**7. Handle Construction:** A good knife handle allows for a solid grip and is devoid of hot spots and sharp surfaces. Its shape and texture should also ensure a non-slip grip without being too aggressive. Hard cuts and thrusts transfer a lot of impact shock through the handle into your hand. Poorly designed handles let your hand slide onto the blade or eat chunks of your hand during hard impact. Either way, you could drop your knife at a very inopportune time.

**8. Trainer:** Fighting with a knife requires solid training, and the best training requires proper equipment — namely, a purpose-designed training knife that replicates your carry blade. For folders, a trainer with a completely blunt edge and tip that has the same mechanical function as your live blade is ideal, since it's the only way to integrate the skills of carry, deployment, and contact tactics with a live partner.

Remember, it's called personal defense for a reason. Follow these tips, do your homework, and think for yourself, and you'll find a carry knife that best meets your needs.





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has since evolved to include many other variations, but as long as the cutting edge is straight and the spine tapers to create an acute point, it's a Wharncliffe.

One of the common criticisms of the Wharncliffe as a personal-defense blade is that its point is too fragile for

Some people have wondered what happens to Pork Man after he's given his all for knife testing. Some Memphis dry rub and six hours of smoke later, and he's Smoked Pork Man.

combative use. Fans of beefy-pointed knives like tantos argue that the Wharncliffe's point can easily break if it strikes a hard surface like a belt buckle, sternum, or skull. Although my immediate response to that quip is to not try to thrust your knife through a belt buckle, I — and medical science — have an even better answer. Over the years, medical researchers and forensic pathologists have conducted numerous studies to determine how much force it takes to penetrate human skin with a knife. While the methodology and results of the studies have varied somewhat, one universal conclusion of all of them was that the force required is directly dependent upon the sharpness (or lack thereof) of the knife's point.

One of the most respected studies determined that extremely sharp points with acute geometry (sound familiar?) require as little as 5 Newtons of force to penetrate skin. Once the skin — the toughest barrier — is pierced, the force required to penetrate the underlying tissue is negligible.

In case you're not up on your physics, 5 newtons is equivalent to 17.98 ounces. During the study, untrained volunteers easily generated 2,000 newtons with their thrusts — or 400 times the amount of force needed to pierce skin.

In my own testing, I found that the unique shape of the Wharncliffe point/edge convergence offers another advantage: As the point penetrates, the tapered spine of the blade acts as a

## BASEBALL BAT DEFENSE

Deception is often the first step in an ambush. A flat tire, you say? Here, our good guy cautiously walks around the car and casually hooks his thumb in his pocket, prepping his knife draw. As he gets within range, the bad guy raises a hidden baseball bat and takes a swing. Good guy evades the swing while opening his Wharncliffe folder. As the attacker begins a backhand swing, good guy lunges forward and checks with his left hand behind the elbow to jam the swing. He then thrusts his knife into the attacker's armpit, xylophones down the attacker's ribs, and then thrusts to the inner thigh. With blade still in flesh, he turns his hand, palm-up, to sever the quadriceps muscle just above the knee. This mobility-kill drops the attacker instantly and decisively stops the threat.





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“ramp” that pushes the edge downward as the wound channel opens. As we’ve already established, constant pressure and simultaneous longitudinal movement of the cutting edge create powerful cuts. In the case of the Wharncliffe, they also amplify the dynamics of the thrust.

### GOT PORK?

You may be wondering if all this talk of Wharncliffes is purely theoretical. It’s not. One of my standard tests of combative cutting performance is what I call Pork Man — a pork roast tied around a wooden dowel and wrapped with a couple dozen layers of plastic wrap. In finished form and clothed with the leg of a pair of jeans, it accurately replicates the composition and resistance of

a human arm or leg. Since those are the primary targets of my system of knife tactics, Pork Man is an excellent measure of the performance I can actually expect from a knife. The presence of the dowel replicates bone, so if a knife snags or breaks on it, it would likely do so on a live limb.

Over the past 15 years, I’ve cut hundreds of Pork Men with scores of different knives and blade patterns. Simply put, the Wharncliffe profile invariably

outperforms everything else, easily cutting to the bone without the risk of snagging or hooking. It also penetrates clothing and flesh almost effortlessly. And even though my thrusts invariably strike or stick in the underlying dowel, I’ve never broken a point.

Like any other weapon, when your life is on the line, it’s all about performance. Don’t settle for looks, tradition, or armchair wisdom — get a knife that does the job. Get a Wharncliffe. ■

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Janich is a noted personal-defense instructor, a member of *Black Belt* magazine’s prestigious Hall of Fame, and the founder of the Martial Blade Concepts system of knife tactics. He also worked closely with the late Col. Rex Applegate and is one of the foremost experts on handgun point shooting.

[www.martialbladeconcepts.com](http://www.martialbladeconcepts.com)

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## SOMETIMES, MANUFACTURERS GET IT EXACTLY RIGHT. SOMETIMES, NOT SO MUCH...

BY IAIN HARRISON  
PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

The DPMS Gen II was introduced at the end of 2013 to great fanfare, showcasing the efforts of DPMS engineers to create a .308 AR lighter and more compact than anything then on the market. Members of the gun writing community gushed over its diminutive dimensions and numerous improvements, much of which was well-deserved. This being a DPMS, the price-to-performance ratio was pretty decent also. When we got to handle one at a pre-launch press event, its advantages over existing designs were notable, but there was a nagging feeling that at least one model was missing from the lineup, and others could be improved. So we set about doing just that.

The DPMS Gen II, while not perfect, makes a decent basis for a custom .308 semi auto.

The DPMS Gen II was to serve as our three-gun rifle for the He-Man Nationals at the NRA Whittington Center in Raton, New Mexico. For this event, we'd be ditching our usual go-faster Open Division gear and going old-school, with a 7.62 NATO battle rifle, a 12-gauge pump gun, and a .45 ACP pistol. We examined a triumvirate of high-end .308s in RECOIL issue 19, but with price tags nudging three grand in some cases, we wanted this one to fit into a beer budget. With the DPMS Gen II being available for a street price of about 1,100 bucks, it seemed like a good place to start.

### CHOICES, CHOICES

Before we commence hacking on a



perfectly good rifle or two, let's consider our objectives and compare those to the guns we have to work with. The finished product should be accurate, function reliably with a wide variety of ammunition, handle quickly on fast-paced courses of fire, and produce a soft recoil impulse — the limiting factor on follow-up shots is how quickly the sights can be reacquired, so keeping the muzzle on target is critical. Currently, there's nothing in the Gen II lineup that fits the bill. Now, if Remington Outdoor Company would like to hire us on a consultancy basis to improve its product line, that could no doubt be arranged for a reasonable fee, or they could divert nine bucks from George Kollitides' generous severance package and buy a copy of RECOIL.

Looking at the 2015 DPMS catalog, three possibilities stand out as contenders for our pre-op base rifle, the Bruce to our Caitlin if you will. There's the 16-inch barreled AP4 carbine, the 20-inch barreled

Hunter model, and the Recon, which also comes with a 16-inch tube. Let's kick the tires and peer under the hood to find out what improvements all three have over previous iterations of the AR-10.

The first thing you'll notice is that receiver dimensions have been shrunk — the Gen II is only a ½-inch longer than its ubiquitous 5.56 baby brother. This reduction in size extends also to the bolt carrier, which is barely larger than the one found in an AR-15, despite it holding a full-sized bolt with radiused locking lugs. Usually the math goes something like this, "bolt carrier – reciprocating mass = less perceived recoil." The bolt itself features an improved extractor powered by an elastomer "spring" borrowed from the automotive industry and twin ejectors kick out the empties through an enlarged ejection port for improved reliability. A reduced diameter barrel extension means AR-15-sized handguards can be used with

only minor changes. Feeding reliability is improved by means of a replaceable steel feed ramp.

Overall it's a well thought-out package of improvements over what came before. Which begs the question of why didn't the factory bring out a carbine that a large section of the market actually wanted.

Of the three rifles available to us, we immediately dismissed the AP4, as carbine-length gas systems on a 7.62 make about much sense as the California Legislature. If they're over-gassed on a .223, we'll leave it to your imagination as to how badly the problem is exacerbated when dealing with almost twice the gas volume in a .308. The Recon addresses this shortcoming with a mid-length gas system (but could use further taming with an adjustable gas block) and lacks a muzzle brake, offering instead a three-prong AAC Blackout flash hider. While accurate, the barrel it's attached to could be

Two flavors of the same dish. Of the pair, the chopped-down Hunter model has a better balanced gas system, but carries more weight. We used Lancer magazines in both, as the DPMS has problems locking back on unmodified Gen 3 P-Mags.







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How they looked when we started. Hunter model's barrel was chopped to 18 inches and threaded for Lantac Dragon, its handguard swapped for KE Arms M-LOK version, and Luth AR stock added.

Recon model was lightened by ditching the boat anchor / cheese grater handguard and reprofiling the barrel. A single-stage trigger and brake improved split times.

employed as an effective war club due to its weight.

The Hunter model has a smooth, unthreaded muzzle, which means attaching a compensator, or anything else for that matter, is something of a challenge. While we like the Hunter's carbon fiber free-float tube, someone had the brilliant idea of putting a lone sling swivel on the underside. See! It's a hunting rifle, just like grandpa's Remmy 700! The only problem is that the old fella's rifle doesn't have a 20-round mag and pistol grip sticking out the bottom that dig into your spine when it's slung. There's a reason our ARs have sling points on the sides.

Because both the Hunter and Recon models had their own set of strengths and weaknesses, we decided to modify both and pick the best one for our purposes.

### TO THE BATCAVE!

KE Arms' resident gunsmith set about preparing each gun for surgery by stripping them down to their component parts. Or, at least, he started to. Progress was brought to a screeching halt by the Recon's flash hider, which was resolutely stuck in place by copious amounts of Rocksett high-temperature thread locker. Time to break out the Dremel. On clearing this minor hurdle, its barrel was chucked up in a lathe and its portly profile reduced to something a bit more manageable. The heavy, cheese-grater-esque quad rail was abandoned in favor of a 15-inch KeyMod handguard from Midwest Industries, which is so slim it almost disappears in the hand. To tune the gas system and dial out some of the velocity from the bolt carrier, we enlisted the guys at Brownells, who sent along a Tubb flat wire recoil spring and adjustable gas block, as well as a Lantac Dragon compensator

to control muzzle rise. At the other end of the gun, the commercial buffer tube and MOE stock were swapped out for Mil-spec tube and Battlelink Minimalist version, while dropping the hammer was taken care of by means of a Geissele Super Dynamic 3 Gun single-stage trigger.

As a result of our modifications, the Recon ended up as a perky little carbine, tipping the scales at a hard-to-believe 6.8 pounds. If this were a movie, at this point you'd hear the sound of a record player needle being dragged across vinyl. Say what? Yep, if DPMS were to catalog it, they would have the lightest and handiest .308 gas gun on the market. Oh well...

On to the Hunter model. Yanking the barrel out of the receiver, we consigned it to the lathe where 2 inches were chopped off the business end and threads added to complete its transformation. The marriage of rifle-length gas system and 18-inch barrel has proven over years of three-gunning to be an excellent combo, giving a smooth recoil impulse and good reliability, so we saw no need to reinvent the wheel. A KE Arms 15-inch M-LOK handguard replaced the issued carbon-fiber unit and was balanced out with a Luth AR stock, which offers adjustability in both length of pull and comb height. The same combination of adjustable gas block and Tubb flat wire recoil spring we used on the Recon was also employed here, though we chose to retain the original two-stage trigger, mainly as a basis for comparison. We ended up with a carbine that was a scant four ounces heavier than when we started, but added a lot in terms of recoil control and functionality.

### ROUNDS DOWNRANGE

During our first range session with the modified Hunter, we noticed a few things. The first was that it feels like a





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*Pictured: BPR-17*

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# MASTERS OF THE (SHOOTING) UNIVERSE

The He-Man Nationals, in the words of its creators Denise and JJ Johnson, is a three-gun match for the big guns. Run over natural terrain in the spectacular setting of the NRA's Whittington Center, competitors are expected to engage targets from muzzle contact distance out to 620 yards, through trees, over ponds, across rocks, and from the tops of ladders. And no, we're not kidding about the last one.

There's a lot of movement involved, and we made the mistake of bringing only one sling, which necessitated the sacrifice of range bag zipper pulls to make loops for HK hooks. Improvise, adapt, overcome.

The range itself is a 33,000-acre, high-alpine gem. Annual membership dues are 50 bucks, which makes for one hell of a bargain. Accommodation is available on site, and if you're tempted by the prospect of a shooting vacation, you'd be well advised to take them up on the offer, as the nearby town of Raton is an unremarkable shithole of boarded-up storefronts, rundown trailer parks, and few redeeming features. Unless, of course, you happen to be a meth connoisseur.

"real" AR-10, without being too heavy or ponderous, which is a good thing. The second was that the gas system felt balanced, with a soft push from the muzzle and a slight tap from the buffer as it reached the end of its stroke. The third was a pierced primer on a factory Federal Gold Medal Match 175-grain case, which was not so great.

In an effort to eliminate ammo as the source of our problems, we tried Prime Ammunition 175-grain, Winchester Ammunition 168-grain match, and Barnes Bullets 175-grain OTM offerings. Next verse, same as the first, with almost every second primer blowing chunks into the bolt.

Time to dig a little deeper. Its headspace checked out OK, as did the firing pin protrusion, which measured right at 0.038 inch, which left only sloppy clearances between the firing pin and firing pin hole in the bolt, something for which .308 ARs, and DPMS in particular, are notorious.

Lacking the time to bush the firing pin hole, we were forced to retire the Hunter and take the revised Recon to the races.

The rest of our weaponry requirements were rounded out by a full-sized Para .45 and a Benelli Supernova — for information on how to tune the Italian pump-gun for three-gun competition, visit RECOILweb.com.

## ACID TEST

How did our new creation perform? The short answer is, "Better than the guy holding it." We used two ammo







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types, the first being a 175-grain match load from Prime Ammunition, which printed a 0.27-inch group when we zeroed with it at 100 yards. (Yeah, we were shaking our heads at that one, too). The second was a cheater load for up-close hosing, consisting of a Nosler 110-grain Varmageddon bullet designed for the .300 BLK, over a healthy dose of H322. The first showed occasional signs of case head swipe, which indicated that the bolt was starting to unlock with the bullet still in the bore — despite our efforts to delay unlocking with a better recoil spring, it would appear that the Recon's gas system is just too short for all loads. The second — when coupled with Lantac's compensator — threw concussive fireballs 3 feet to either side of the muzzle, but recoiled like shooting 77-grain bullets through an AR-15.

The DPMS Gen II shows a lot of potential, but is hampered by

the current factory offerings — which is frustrating as a consumer, because Remington Outdoor Group already either makes all the necessary parts to turn this into a great gun or

has vendor relationships with the required suppliers. So how about it Big Green? Give us a Hunter model with a threaded muzzle, 18-inch barrel, and side-mounted sling swivels. Or a Recon with a decent handguard, lighter barrel, longer gas system, and muzzle device that doesn't either wed us to AAC's cans or need a cutoff wheel to remove. And sort out the QC issues on your god damn bolts.

Do it and we'll love you long time. **R**



## SPEC BOX

DPMS  
GEN II RECON

**CALIBER**  
**.308**

**BARREL LENGTH**  
**16 inches**

**OVERALL LENGTH**  
**38 inches**

**WEIGHT (EMPTY)**  
**6.8 pounds**

**MAGAZINE CAPACITY**  
**20**

**MSRP**  
**\$1,760**

**PRICE AS FEATURED**  
**\$4,795**

**URL**  
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Vortex Razor HD Gen II 1-6x24	\$2,000
ADM AD-Recon Scope Mount	\$190
Midwest Industries 15-inch KeyMod Handguard	\$230
Lantac Dragon muzzle break	\$170
Mission First Tactical Battlelink Minimalist stock	\$60
Tubb flat-wire recoil spring	\$30
Geissele Super Dynamic 3 Gun (SD-3G) Trigger	\$260
Lancer L7 AWM magazine	\$45
KE Arms ambi selector	\$50





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# HOT, FILTHY, AND SUPPRESSED, THIS PISTON GUN JUST KEEPS RUNNING

BY PETER PALMA  
PHOTOS BY SHOOT TO THRILL

You might assume by the nearby picture and title of this article that it's all about another AR variant. Like us, you're probably sick and tired of hearing about the "groundbreaking new" AR that, in essence, is the same as every other. Well fear not! Not only are you about to see firsthand what separates a company making dodgy gear from those companies making a quality product worth the extra bucks, but Adcor Defense's A-556

Elite operates completely differently from any AR rifle ever made. The Elite is the world's only free-floating gas piston AR — in fact, it's arguably the only truly free-floating AR on planet earth. You call bullshit? Well so did we. More on that later after an appropriate analogy.

When AR shopping, how are you supposed to tell the difference from so many similar-looking rifles? What makes the difference between a

\$600 entry-level AR and a quality, well-manufactured gat? Is that expensive rifle a quality product, or some well-marketed mediocrity by a company who just got themselves a CNC machine and barrel nut wrench, then slapped a graphic featuring a Spartan helmet and "Melon Labia" on the side of the receiver? And just what the hell is a melon labia, and would we appreciate one if we encountered it? All Latin jokes aside...





The necessary ingredients for a great firearm lie in the company's ability to efficiently engineer products, precisely manufacture components, mass produce while maintaining quality control, and take feedback collected from the end-user and use it to improve their products. Adcor has the manufacturing boxes well and truly checked, because it's always been a precision manufacturer. The company specializes in making soda bottling machines, which

run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are vastly more complicated than any semi-auto carbine. Adcor made the leap from soda-bottling machines to rifles when other major firearms companies approached them to manufacture AR internals faster and more accurately than they were capable of. Lest you doubt that soda-bottling equipment has any relevance to the business of making things that go bang, once word got around of its quality, orders

for components for Trident nuclear missiles and F-16 radars started rolling in, so turning out a quality rifle is a comparative walk in the park.

During our tour of the facility, men in white lab coats were using large, complicated, and expensive equipment to measure tiny details of parts down to a gnat's ass. There was a room full of engineers quietly adjusting CAD drawings and poring over a myriad of numbers. Though engineers often look down





their lofty perches on knuckle-dragging end-users like us, they're a necessary evil. They understand the black magic of physics and can calculate boring but critical things like loads and stresses that ultimately allow them to make rifles more accurate and reliable — and to use materials more efficiently, thereby cutting down on unnecessary weight, which, despite us being strong like tractor, we appreciate.

All of these factors mean nothing if the consumer is not a part of the process; otherwise you end up with a well-manufactured tool that's as useful as a baseball cap with sleeves. All too often, we see firearms or accessories with features that probably made perfect sense in the bright, clean environment of the design lab, but which fall on their ass when given to a cold, wet Marine who hasn't taken a shower in weeks and just ran out of dip. Oftentimes manufacturers, engineers, and QC technicians are not shooters, so it's important to include the end user in the feedback loop.

The A-556 Elite was one of five rifles selected from over 80 manufacturers to enter the final cut of the U.S. Army's Individual Carbine Competition before the powers that be canceled the program — a clear testament to whom this rifle is intended. Being end-users ourselves,

we can see that the A-556 Elite is well thought out and well made. When disassembling and reassembling this rifle, the parts fit together perfectly, with pins and takedowns that are cleverly captured and require no tools to operate, besides a 5.56mm round.

### PASSING GAS FREELY

Though the A-556 Elite looks like a run-of-the-mill M-4, what exactly separates it from the herd? Just the fact that it's piston driven and free floating! You may want to sit down while we explain this. Like any other gas-operated rifle, there's a hole in the barrel through which gasses are redirected to cycle the action. In all other gas-piston ARs, these gasses push a piston, which then transfers rearward force to the bolt carrier. The same happens in the A-556 Elite, but in this case there's a ring around the barrel with a probe that diverts gas into a separate chamber, where the short-stroke piston is held in place by the proprietary handguard system. This piston then pushes rearward on a one-piece, proprietary bolt carrier.

At no point does the barrel touch any part of the rifle other than at the barrel nut, and the entirety of the piston system is held in place by the handguards mounted solidly to the upper receiver. The gap between the

gas probe and the short-stroke piston chamber is like that between a revolver cylinder and barrel — no contact is made. Even in so-called free-floating direct-impingement ARs, the barrel isn't truly isolated because the gas tube is still connected to the gas block and threads back into the upper receiver. The A-556 Elite doesn't even have a gas block. This system also allows the bolt carrier to have multiple points of contact in the upper, completely eliminating carrier tilt, common among other piston-operated ARs.

So does this new system work? Why yes, yes it does.

We put a target at 100 yards, dropped down into the unsupported prone, peered through our three-power ACOG, and consistently achieved 1-inch groups with both Hornady TAP and 69-grain Federal remanufactured ammunition. Even with a 14.5-inch cold hammer-forged chrome-lined M4-profile barrel using less than match-quality M-855 ammo, we still easily produced groups of less than 1.5 inches. After being bored stupid with its consistent accuracy, well, you know what comes next. Yep, we shifted our focus toward trying to break the thing.

Despite throwing it around and covering it in mud (especially around the open area of the handguard) there were





no malfunctions. We even went against our better judgment and filled the barrel with swamp water (as seen on the next page) and fired it. There were zero malfunctions with any of the multitude of ammo types we used, making it one of the most accurate and reliable M4s we've tested. However, the Elite's reliability didn't really come as that much of a surprise to us. When touring the factory's test range we noticed a pile of filthy rifles and drums filled with various materials such as dirt, sand, mud, water, and hobo feces. OK, we lied about the last one. Staffers encouraged us to get the rifles as filthy we wanted and shoot the snot out of them to try to induce a malfunction. Short of opening the action and filling it up completely, we were miserably unsuccessful in our

attempts to stop the A-556 Elite from going bang.

### FORWARD THINKING

The unique gas system is also adjustable for suppressor use, different ammunition types, or to change the cyclic rate. When fitted with an Advanced Armament Mini-4 set on the lowest of the four gas settings, our test rifle ran clean and cycled flawlessly. We also had no excess gas come back in our face. Stop laughing.

The short-stroke piston, where the vast majority of the fouling occurs, can quickly and easily be removed for cleaning, thus keeping the rifle running longer with minimal amount of effort. The A-556 Elite also has a non-reciprocating forward charging handle cleverly tucked

away between the top and side rails so it won't snag. However, it's easily accessible and automatically folds forward under spring tension. For the sake of argument, let's say you could afford the ammo budget to completely cake the piston with carbon and turn the rifle into a single shot. You could still effectively engage multiple targets because the ergonomic position of the forward charging handle allows you to maintain sight alignment while manually cycling the rifle.

Not only is the forward charging handle ambidextrous, but unlike other similarly equipped carbines, it complements the standard rear charging handle that's located in the same place it's always been since Stoner finalized the design. If, like us, you've built up







muscle memory for the M4's manual of arms, then there's nothing to stop you from using the gun in the manner you're used to. On the downside, the forward charging handle sits so close to the Picatinny rail that nothing can be mounted on the same side, though it can be removed all together without tools, should the shooter need that particular bit of real estate.

Not only does the ejection port have the standard dust cover, but the bolt carrier has another interesting feature to help prevent debris from entering the rifle. A radiused piece of self-lubricating polymer is attached to the bolt carrier via two springs that push toward the ejection port. This dust swipe closes all gaps around the ejection port leading into the rifle, even if the cover is not closed.

The A-556 Elite is available in a number of barrel lengths. The carbine-length handguard version comes with either a 16- or 14.5-inch barrel, for

those who choose to permanently attach a muzzle device to bring the overall length of the barrel up to the legal minimum. If you choose to go the SBR route, a 10.5-inch barrel is also available. For those who use the Costa Lotus-style grip with your support hand, a longer rifle-length rail is available in 18- or 20-inch barrel lengths. All A-556 Elites are optic-ready with no fixed front sight and are chambered in 5.56mm. All upper receivers, lower receivers, and handguards are machined from billet 7075-T6 aluminum.

The Adcor A-556 Elite is the product of a perfect storm of state-of-the-art manufacturing, great engineering, attention to detail, and forward

thinking. For every job, there's an ideal tool. The A-556 Elite doesn't have a cool name or even look particularly special. It's black and doesn't come in the latest popular color or camouflage pattern. It doesn't have the new handguard with a new accessory locking system, or a fancy super-loud muzzle brake, or even amusing pictograms on the selector lever and ejection port cover. It isn't meant to sit unscratched in the gun safe until it's time to impress your friends, it's simply a tool. It's for those shooters who require a superbly accurate M4 designed to run with limited maintenance, under the most adverse conditions, even while suppressed. What's not to like? ■

SPEC BOX

## ADCOR DEFENSE A-556 ELITE

URL  
[www.adcordefense.com](http://www.adcordefense.com)

<p> <b>CALIBER</b> 5.56mm</p> <p> <b>BARREL LENGTH</b> 14.5 inches, plus pinned and welded muzzle device</p> <p> <b>OVERALL LENGTH</b> 31 inches (stock collapsed)</p> <p> <b>WEIGHT (EMPTY)</b> 6.85 pounds</p> <p> <b>MAGAZINE CAPACITY</b> 30</p>	<p> <b>MSRP</b> <b>\$2,200</b></p> <p> <b>PRICE AS FEATURED</b> <b>\$4,558</b></p>	<p> <b>ACCESSORIES</b></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td>B5 Systems Grip Stop</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$55</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Trijicon 3x30 ACOG</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$1,407</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AAC MINI4 suppressor</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$896</td> </tr> </table>	B5 Systems Grip Stop	\$55	Trijicon 3x30 ACOG	\$1,407	AAC MINI4 suppressor	\$896
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BY DAVID MERRILL



**Mexico.** Just the name will conjure divergent thoughts. Cancun. Cartels. Corona. Acapulco. Ammunition.

You may be familiar with Aguila Ammunition, especially if you're a rimfire shooter. In the United States, Aguila's mostly known for cheap .22 LR and some exotic shotshells, and perhaps some dubious quality control. More on that in a minute.

Aguila was first established in the early 1960s under the tutelage of Remington Arms in a previously undeveloped part of Mexico just outside of Cuernavaca. Other companies, such as Nissan, followed suit and soon the region was bustling. Industrias Tecnos (the parent company) eventually expanded Aguila into a massive 120-acre complex that employs more than 830 locals.

Aguila makes *a lot* of rimfire ammunition. Twenty-seven varieties of rimfire to be exact. This isn't exactly

surprising, given its location. While centerfire calibers are restricted to .380 and smaller for civilians, rimfire and shotshells remain largely unregulated in Mexico. Aguila does indeed produce centerfire ammunition, quite a bit of it in fact, but mostly for the Mexican national police, military, and for export. Aguila manufactures an astounding 85 percent of all legal ammunition in Mexico.

And not a whole lot more is known after that. When we received word Aguila had revamped its entire organization, quality control, and product line, we were excited to check it out for ourselves. Was this going to be just another company overhauling its logo or would there be more going on?

#### UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Back in 2011, Aguila Ammunition hired an American company, Texas

Armament and Technology (Tx-AT), headed by Leon Brenner, to begin a program which it called the Modernization and Optimization Project (MODOP). Tx-AT was to inspect the entire operation, from components to manufacturing to management, and implement any needed changes. Essentially, they hung an "Under New Management" banner and got to work.

New machines were installed while old ones were scrapped, westernized quality control was implemented, and security at the plant was heightened. Stop for a minute and imagine what a factory floor in Mexico must look like — what you envision is the polar opposite of what you actually get at Aguila. Factory floors were clean, machines appeared to be well maintained, and there were security controls all over the place — hardly a so-called Third-World operation.







Increasing accuracy with zero duds is my mission.”

Others in Aguila and Tx-AT were just as open. “There’s a reason the guys who used to do these jobs aren’t here,” said Chris Sadler, director of operations of Tx-AT, while detailing some of the new quality control initiatives.

It’s been an uphill battle, four years in the making, and now they’re ready to reintroduce themselves to the American public.

## SPECIAL (FORCES) SECURITY

The elephant in the room was security. It’s no secret that Mexico has had its share of problems with cartels and other narco organizations, often leading to violent conflict. In short: lots of physical security at the plant itself, military-escorted convoys during shipment, restrictions of calibers produced, and a lot of general operational security.

During the tour of the factory, RECOIL got an inside look at the company’s daily operations. There’s a whimsical mix of old and new technology. On the one hand, you have the largest old-school, gravity-fed lead shot maker in the world (molten lead is poured from great heights into water, and the size of the shot created is based on the elevation of the poured



Top left: Luis Baiza and author.

Top right: Leon Brener, Chris Sadler, and John Domolky from Tx-AT.

Above: Rodney Taylor and Creed McCaslin.

Right: Loading Machine.

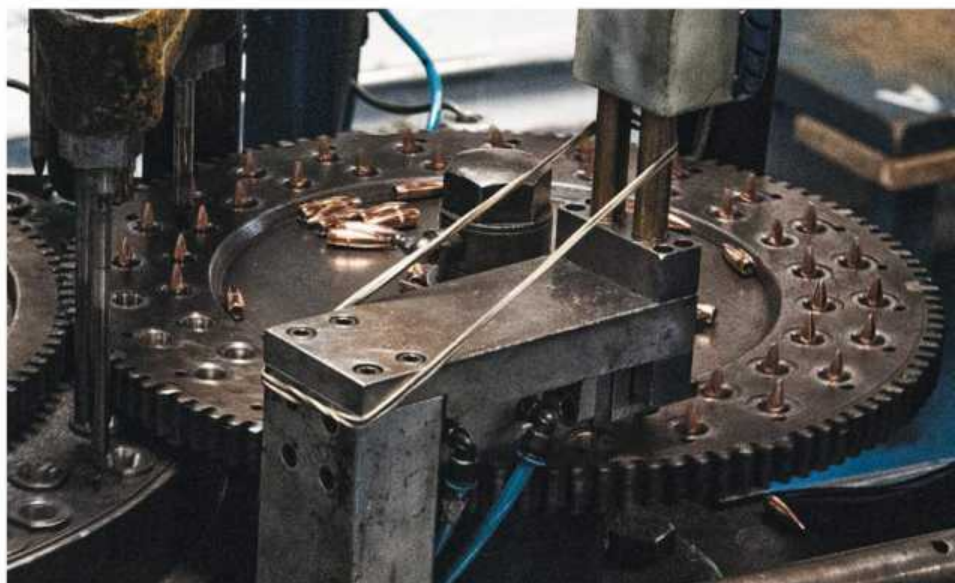
As part of MODOP, there were some major management changes in the pipeline as well. Luis Baiza, the new CEO who has been in the position for about a year, was recruited from one of the largest concrete manufacturers in the world, Lafarge. Yuriko Luna, previously an underemployed executive assistant with an engineering degree, was made the major products supervisor.

“Everyone wants to be Budweiser. ...dress up their company like it’s an American company,” Baiza said when asked about the new direction of Aguila. “We don’t want to be Budweiser. We want to be Corona, the preferred quality foreign brand — not an imitator or imposter.”

The Wolf was also brought in. In 1994’s *Pulp Fiction*, the Wolf (played by Harvey Keitel) was a general fixer and cleaner. The real life Wolf’s name is Rodney Taylor. No, he doesn’t clean

up dead bodies and he’s (probably) not a trained killer. What Taylor does is modernize ammunition production. He started out at Lake City, but has worked around the globe over the last four decades: IMI in Israel, LMI in Italy, ADI in Australia, POF in Pakistan, and now Aguila in Mexico.

Rodney was frank, forthcoming, and unapologetic about missteps that came before his time. We talked about our previous experience with Aguila ammunition, including unburned powder in cartridges, funky smells, and dubious accuracy. He didn’t even try to blow smoke like so many would in his position. He put it succinctly: “I’m not here to apologize for past mistakes; I’m here to make sure they don’t happen now.





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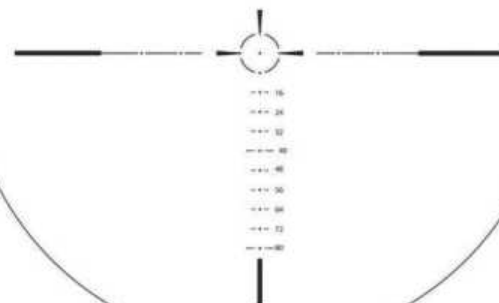
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Did we say live-fire testing? Oh yes, there was a lot of that. Aguila has many weapons on site; some from the extensive family collection, others for testing, and still more for security personnel. Given the history with Remington, it was no surprise that Big Green products made up a good chunk

of the collection. There were also some outliers; from the lowly Raven .25 ACP, to the Mendoza HM-3 subgun, to this author's favorite, the Galil ACE-21. Of course you had to have the ubiquitous Glocks, 1911s, and M4s. Of the hundreds of rounds fired that day, true to Rodney Taylor's words, there were no

lead) abutted against a building where the newest loading machines churn out boxes of .308 by the thousands.

It's not every day you run into a famous high-ranking former Special Forces guy on a Mexican factory floor, but that's exactly what happened. Strengthening the argument that Tx-AT and Aguila's partnership has attracted the best people in the world, retired U.S. Army Sergeant Major Creed McCaslin was hired as a special security advisor and consultant. Creed was on hand during our live-fire testing to help anyone who wasn't familiar with any of the weapons, and to accidentally embarrass everyone else with his phenomenal shooting.

Top: Author with Galil ACE 21.

Above: Goofy Mexican Mendoza (photo courtesy of Tim Harmsen).

Right: Long arms from the family collection.





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stoppages or malfunctions. We didn't get an opportunity to perform formal accuracy testing on any of the loads, but we were shown some ballistic demonstrations.

Aguila's ballistic supervisor, Ricardo Espinoza, fired various rounds into not only the ever-popular-on-video watermelon, but also into calibrated ballistics gelatin and through vehicle doors. Of particular note was the Supri-Colibri .22 LR and the new IQ defensive ammunition.

The Super-Colibri uses a double primer charge, without any traditional powder, as a propellant. The IQ projectile is constructed of cast zinc, which we understand to be a derivative of Zamak. The IQ rounds are supposed to condense and penetrate when it hits hard surfaces, and expand and separate in soft tissue. Check out the picture to the right showing its performance.

We found all of the staff at Aguila and Tx-AT to be guileless and sincere. The openness of both Luis Baiza and Rodney Taylor about the day-to-day operations was especially refreshing. In the end, it all comes down to the product, and in this case that means ammunition. By all appearances, the old smelly and inconsistent Aguila is a thing of the past. How do you know if you have the new or the old stuff? Aguila just began rolling out some all-new packaging to make it easier to identify. Now, that doesn't mean that if you find an older logo on a box in your local gun store that it's pre-MODOP, but rest assured if it has the new logo, it was made under the guidance of Tx-AT and the new management team.

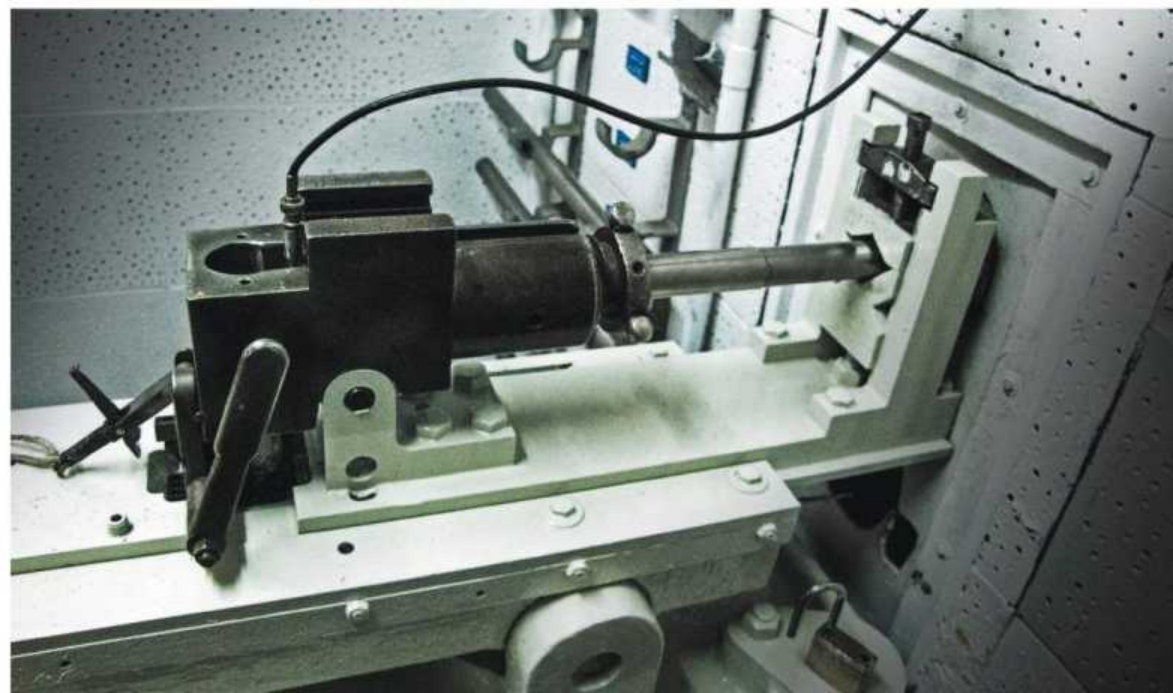
If you've never fired Aguila ammunition or it's been a while since you have, give it a (second) chance. Then, have a Corona afterward. **R**

Right: 9mm IQ Round.

Far right: Gelatin from IQ ammo test.

Below: Yuriko Luna being wanded for ammo after leaving centerfire production.

Bottom: Quality check "gun."





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# FROM **RUSSIA** [VIA ITALY] WITH LOVE

SLAVIC VAPORWARE NO LONGER, THE STRIKE ONE IS SLOWLY MAKING ITS WAY INTO THE USA  
BY KEITH WOOD



Perhaps from watching *Red Dawn* too many times as a kid or being too heavily influenced by Cold War propaganda, I honestly just don't trust the Russians. Keep this blatant prejudice in mind as I felt quite skeptical when first hearing about the Strike One pistol, developed by Arsenal Firearms in Mother Russia. It's actually built and proofed in Italy, but why miss a chance to take a stab at the people who killed Jed and Matt Eckert? This handgun's designers claimed an innovative locking mechanism, the likes of which we'd never seen, resulting in an obscenely low bore axis.

Two years after we first heard about it, we still hadn't seen one. Well, guess what? It's real, you can touch it — we have one, and we shot the crap out of it.

Any discussion of an innovative polymer-framed pistol leads inevitably to a comparison to the mighty Glock, so let's take a short cut and start there. The Strike One is a full-sized handgun almost identical dimensionally to the long-slide Glock 34/35. The gun's size, especially the length of the grip, makes it an unlikely concealed-carry choice for all but the most determined, so it's logical to assume a more compact version for the U.S. concealed-carry market will be along at some point. When it comes to actually shooting the Strike One, its size and long sight radius transform from liability to asset.



## UNLOCK AND LOAD

What sets the Strike One apart from virtually every handgun on the market, especially in the polymer-frame defensive category, is its departure from the near-ubiquitous Browning operating mechanism. Instead, the Strike One uses what could be considered an adaptation of the Bergmann system, designed by Louis Schmeisser around

The Strike One features a unique locking block that moves vertically and allows for a low bore axis.

the turn of the previous century. While the Browning design works by allowing the barrel to tilt downward at the breech to unlock it from the slide, the Strike One incorporates a vertically mobile locking block under the barrel to keep things in battery. When the Strike One is fired, the barrel travels rearward a short distance before the C-shaped block descends downward into the frame. With the locking block out of the way, the slide can travel to the rear without any vertical movement of the barrel. The result is a handgun with an extremely low bore axis and a fast-cycling operating system that seems to minimize muzzle rise. The Strike One's bore axis is 40-percent lower than that of the G17 (which is no slouch in that department), and its cycling time is faster by a fraction of a second. Impressive. Because the barrel remains in the same plane during cycling, we would imagine the Strike One would make for







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stop are where you expect them to be, and there's no external safety. Even with average-sized hands, the mag release and the bolt stop can be reached without shifting your grip on the gun. An ambidextrous mag release comes included with the pistol, but we left it in the box.

The magwell is wide and has a smooth beveled edge to funnel magazines into the gun, and the steel and polymer mags appear to be made by Mec-Gar of Italy. The dust cover is railed to accept a light, laser, or even a bayonet if you're enough of a mouth-breather to think that's good idea.

The trigger incorporates a passive safety feature that requires that

an excellent suppressor host, though we did not have the opportunity to test this theory.

The unique locking mechanism isn't a noticeable component of the gun unless you shoot it or take it apart — from a control standpoint, the Strike One works like most other striker-fired handguns on the market. The mag release and slide



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If you ever considered the Glock to be aesthetically challenged, you may think the Strike One looks like a bulldog licking piss off a 9-volt battery.

is pretty aggressive and slippage shouldn't be an issue — it certainly wasn't for us. Grip geometry and surface is a pretty personal thing though, and no doubt there will be plenty of guys taking sand paper and a wood-burner to this grip to make it their own.

## ROUNDS DOWNRANGE

We didn't have much time to test this gun due to limited availability and our desire to get it into this issue, so a few long range days were in order. We started by running mag after mag of Georgia Arms 115-grain FMJ through it to make sure that it worked and to get used to the trigger and recoil impulse. It was immediately obvious that the unique locking system made this gun different. There was noticeably less muzzle flip due either to the mechanism or the mechanical advantage of the higher grip, and the gun recoiled straight back into the hand — it almost felt like the gun had a compensator on

pounds. The trigger is by no means bad, it's just nothing to write home about — the good news is that once you get past the initial take-up, the pull is short, as is the reset. For the low, low price of \$300, the U.S. distributor will do a factory-authorized competition upgrade, which smooths out the trigger pull, gets the weight down to about 4 pounds, and shortens the reset even further. The trigger's front surface is wide and comfortable, and since it lacks any protrusions, you won't have a blister on your trigger finger after a 500-round range day.

The hallmark of the Strike One is clearly its near-subterranean bore axis, allowing it to ride way low in the hand. When you grip this handgun, your trigger finger is essentially in line with the recoil spring, and (thankfully) a short beavertail prevents any slide bite. The back-strap is well-shaped to allow for a high grip on the gun, using a variety of geometrical patterns to keep your hands in one spot. The surface

the trigger be pulled for the striker to release. Unlike designs that use a protruding blade (Glock) or an articulating trigger bow (M&P), the entire trigger pivots rearward when pressure is applied, unlocking the firing pin block. It's our job to be hypercritical, so we'll say right off that the trigger pull is a bit spongy — we're paid to be trigger snobs, though. There's initial take-up to engage the passive safety followed by a bit of creep before it breaks right at 5







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it. The realities of life have found this scribe perfecting diaper-changing abilities more often than shooting handguns in the past several months, but the hits came immediately with this pistol.

After interviewing Bill Rogers for RECOIL and attending his school in North Georgia last year, the value of his “reaction time”-based performance benchmarks have become quite clear. Rogers gives you half of a second to make a hit from the “ready” position and 0.25 seconds for a follow-up shot on the same target. With a steel head plate at 10 yards and a timer on a random delay, we were able to consistently get sub 0.40 second first round hits with split times for follow-up shots in the 0.2-0.25 second range. Even this rusty shooter was getting 0.60-second controlled pairs and hitting the small target 90 percent of the time while doing so. A Glock 17 was used for comparison and, despite 20 years of shooting that design, times were not as fast as they were with the Strike One. There are several variables that contribute to fast shooting but, in this case, we believe it was the ability to control recoil with a solid and high grip

Despite its homely looks, we're hanging on to this one and giving it a trigger job. Look for an update on RECOILweb.com.



on the gun, combined with the straight-line operation that made the difference.

Arsenal Firearms makes it clear in their literature that a 500-round break-in period is necessary before the gun should be fired with anything but FMJ ammo — apparently they aren't kidding about that. We ran 10 or so different defensive loads through the gun and, sure enough, there were numerous malfunctions. The Strike One suffered failures to feed with Liberty Ammunition's 50-grain +P load, Federal's 147-grain Hydra-Shok, and Hornady's 115-grain FTX.

Cor-Bon's +P 115-grain JHP caused a failure to extract that locked up the gun with a double feed. This is not a

dig on the gun since the manufacturer made it clear that a break-in period was necessary, but it's important that you don't carry this gun with self-defense ammo until you've completed the break-in and confirmed that your ammo functions 100 percent. We experienced zero malfunctions during many hundreds of rounds of FMJ ammo.

After a long wait, these guns are finally shipping to dealers in the USA. It'll be interesting to see the market's reaction and the availability of aftermarket parts and modifications to take this gun to the next level. The Strike One has some truly unique qualities that will make it a natural choice for production division shooters as well as for defensive use. We see the Strike One fitting comfortably in the G34/35 niche of the American handgun market. Consumers will decide whether this pistol lives up to the hype, but in our estimation it does what the marketers say it does. **R**

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It's great to see large numbers of Americans obtaining their concealed handgun licenses. I love it and am happy to see more and more folks taking their personal safety as their own responsibility.

As a result, we've seen a higher demand for concealed carry tactics classes — this year alone, it represents over one-third of our training schedule at Trident Concepts. That's hugely important and here's why: the increasing number of responsible gun owners who take up concealed carry will be noticed by would-be criminals as well as terrorists, which may not be something at the top of everyone's mind.

Let's look at the big picture regarding terrorist attacks on our home soil. First, our military, made up of the very best we have to offer, is taking the fight to the bad guy, where he sleeps and eats. Next, we have the best trained and equipped emergency services in the world, armed and ready to respond to all types of circumstances. Lastly, we have the citizen who elects to carry a concealed weapon. They represent a final layer in our overall defensive strategy, and they're also the most difficult to predict, since by their very nature they aren't overt. Being concealed means the bad guys don't always know who is carrying and who is not, and at times that can be the ultimate deterrent. Admiral Yamamoto said it best when describing why the imperial Japanese forces would be unwise to attempt an invasion of the USA during WWII — "There would be a rifle behind every blade of grass."

## THE GOOD WITH THE BAD

The flipside to carrying concealed is that the bad guys don't know you're armed. That may sound kind of weird, but if they did suspect you were armed, they'd probably look for an easier target. I'm not saying that we should all carry openly, as that would remove any element of uncertainty from the equation, not to mention create unwanted

attention from the greater public. But there's two sides to every argument, and it's worth mentioning for the sake of integrity.

Unfortunately, when most bad things occur, they happen at close range. That means the bad guy will literally be within arm's reach. This can pose a significant problem, as the concealed pistol you

carry is of little good if you can't get it into the fight. Employing it at ultra-close ranges requires time and space. Once you create those advantages, it then becomes mainly a mechanical skill to be added to the toolbox like any other.





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## THE GO-TO RESPONSE

When you're within arm's reach of the bad guy, the act of drawing from concealment to your close contact position should give you a good fighting stance. Some might think contact shots are your better solution in this position. While contact shots, near contact shots, and off-angle shots should form part of your inventory, your go-to will be the close contact shot. Here's how to set it up.

Drawing the pistol from concealment and bringing it high along your rib cage will provide you with a solid platform to engage from at these ultra close ranges. The key components are position, tension, and muzzle awareness. The position needs to be along the rib cage, high, and near the armpit. If you made it a practice during your draw stroke to pause at this position then it's a no brainer. Probably the biggest mistake we see is folks who forgo or overlook

Keep the pistol tucked into your ribcage, but use the outside of your thumb to create space and keep the slide away from your clothing.

As soon as you can effectively land rounds, get onto the trigger and start making hits, tracking up your adversary's torso.

this position in their draw stroke — some don't even know it exists. Once in the correct position, you want to have good tension, generated in your arm, core, and lats — if you're this close to the bad guy, chances are you're tangled up. The more tension you have, the better you can retain control of the weapon. Lastly is muzzle awareness. More often than not, folks will draw to close contact, but not be on target. You want the muzzle level and pointing where your body is oriented. Your natural index will aid in your accuracy.

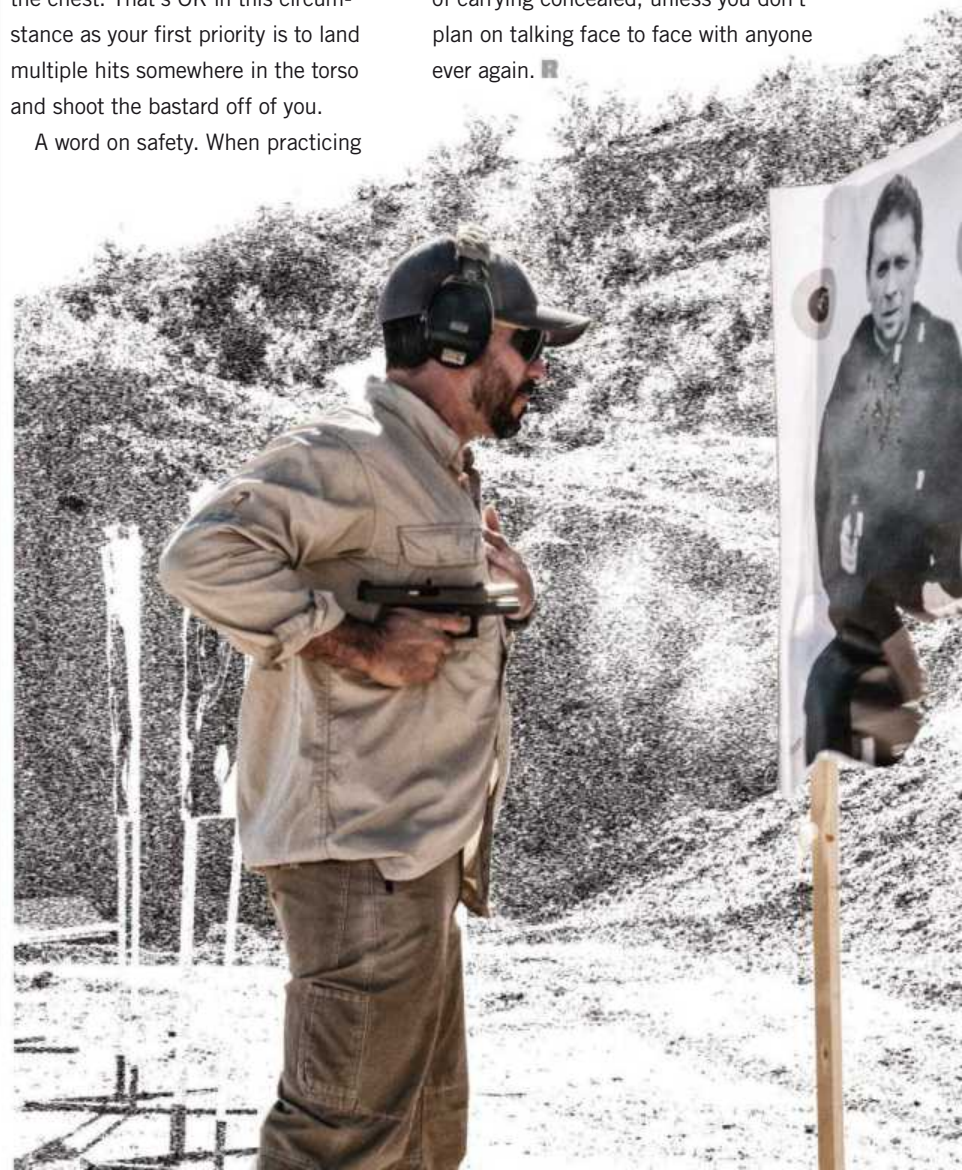
The most common mistakes we see are when folks can't get the weapon away from their body, fail to generate proper positioning, or try to elevate the muzzle to aim at the target zones. One of the problems with close contact is that initially you won't get good hits in the chest. That's OK in this circumstance as your first priority is to land multiple hits somewhere in the torso and shoot the bastard off of you.

A word on safety. When practicing

this drill at close range, be extremely aware of the position of your support hand, as it won't be in its usual location, safely wrapped around your master hand. There's a very real danger of placing it forward of your muzzle — and then bad things can happen. Until you get used to shooting from extremely close range, get it out of the way and planted firmly on your chest or the back of your skull.

You'll need to get some distance in order to obtain more accurate shots in the vitals. We'll cover in future articles how to do this with the Step Back Drill and Close Contact Drill.

Carrying concealed comes with great responsibility. It also comes with some acknowledgment that most of your encounters will be at ultra close ranges. Close contact drills are an integral part of carrying concealed, unless you don't plan on talking face to face with anyone ever again. ■





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BY IAIN HARRISON  
PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

Colin Edwards is an anomaly. At the rarefied heights of top-level motorcycle racing, the average rider (and by average, we mean truly exceptional) enters by means of winning in lesser divisions, maybe picks up a factory ride, and then lasts perhaps five years before succumbing to the relentless physical and mental demands of competition and development. In contrast, before retiring in 2014, Edwards had been competing at the very highest levels for almost two decades.

You might expect that after 19 years of racing and crashing high-performance motorcycles, the average person might be ready for a well-earned retirement. The problem with that

conclusion is that the average person hasn't got a hope in hell of ever mastering the skills needed to pilot a two-wheeled missile around the globe's hardest road racing circuits — the sheer drive and determination needed to compete against the best in the world is not enough. You either have an innate talent for living at the very edge of the performance envelope, or you don't. So rather than swapping his Sidi's for slippers, Edwards signed a grueling two-year deal with Yamaha and Michelin as a test rider, as well as a TV gig commentating on nine race events for CBS.

In an insanely expensive international sport where athletes are groomed by

their corporate sponsors as media personalities, Edwards is a breath of fresh air — and a PR flack's nightmare. Famously outspoken, when asked by a journalist at a press conference to comment on the handling qualities of his new Aprilia race bike, he described it thus: "You find the biggest, meanest bull, chop off his balls, dangle them in front of him, then hop on his back ... That, or shove a shuttle rocket up your ass. Take your pick." The bike later turned into a 200-mph Molotov cocktail, with Edwards on board. Quizzed on his opinion of his then-teammate James Toseland, he offered, "He's an asshole, and his crew chief's an asshole." So that's settled then.



THE TEXAS TORNADO



We caught up with him at one of his Texas Tornado Boot Camps, a riding school he runs on his property north of Houston, Texas, just after working at the Circuit of the Americas MotoGP race in Austin and before hopping a plane to Argentina to find the limits of some experimental rubber. While we were there, Edward's former teammate and world champion Valentino Rossi dropped in to thrash a bike for an hour or two and send a few rounds downrange.

**RECOIL:** Despite growing up in Texas, you didn't get into firearms as a hobby until later in life. Why was that?

**Colin Edwards:** I never had time, honestly. I have this OCD personality, and when I get into something, I go full bore. First, believe it or not, it was bowling. I bought shoes and balls and all that crap, did it for six months until I could hold my own, then moved on to

golf, then wakeboarding. A buddy took me out, then I bought a boat the next day, then every morning for two years I'd ride. If I get focused on something, then I'll do it obsessively until I'm good at it. And then Obama. I was like, "Shit, I might lose some rights here." So I took the opportunity to load up, and for a year or so I was buying a minimum of a gun a week.

#### Starting with what?

**CE:** [Laughs.] I'd never bought a gun before, so I walked into my local gun shop just down the road — this is Texas, so they had everything you could think of all laid out. I saw a gun I liked the look of and said, 'Yeah, I'll take that one.' I had no idea what I was looking at, but the owner put it on the counter, then I saw a rifle that was cammoed out, and that looked pretty good too, and the third one I liked was

a Beretta CX4 carbine, so that went on the counter also. I was waiting for the guy to go, "Whoa, whoa, whoa!" so I asked him, "Just how many can I buy? Is there some kind of limit here?" And he says, "Are you a criminal?" No. "Got a driver's license?" Yes. "You can buy the whole f#cking store if you want to."

#### What came next?

**CE:** Then it was a whole bunch of reading and research and buying more guns — again, my OCD, anal personality. I'd come home with a new gun, see my wife, and go, "Look what I just bought for you!" I'd try different ammo in each rifle to see which one performed the best and pretty soon got into reloading, so now I reload everything. Doing so, I reconnected with some buddies from high school who are big hunters so we shoot together

OCD to the max, Edwards has a spotless reloading setup in his garage, right next to a blown Cobra.





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on steel out to a mile — long-range rifle is what I enjoy the most. I shot that Kudu [hanging in the lodge] at 825 yards at my buddy's place with his 7mm mag after we doped the wind for an hour.

**Do you prefer hunting to target shooting?**

**CE:** No, I much prefer target shooting. I'll come out here for a day and spend five hours just testing loads, and I'll get lost in just trying to make it perfect. I would say that if anyone out there is not reloading and you're pissed off with your accuracy, you need to start reloading. *[Laughs.]*

**It's not like you've ever been a particularly competitive person — any chance we'll see you at a match some day?**

**CE:** Surprisingly, I'm not into formal shooting competitions. Sure, I'll go out with buddies and we'll see who can nail a 1,000-yard cold-bore shot, but I'm

What do you do if you want to shoot clays and the heavens open? Set up the trap inside your covered riding arena.

just OK with a pistol. I missed today with a shotgun and that really pissed me off, and we have a little "five-gun" match here at the boot camp for the guests, but that's as far as it goes at the moment. The only competitions I get into where scores count is sporting clays. We had a big charity event recently with about 800 shooters and I shot 85 out of 100 birds. I beat my buddy, and that's all I cared about.

**All the guys we know at Yamaha USA are into guns and the outdoors. Was there any time that Yamaha in Japan told you to cool it with regards to using firearms on social media?**

**CE:** No, not really. I made the mistake one time when I posted a picture on Twitter of the first impala I shot in Africa, and that was a shitstorm with people telling me I was a murderer. Since then, I've learned that I don't need to share that stuff publicly.

**You retired from the MotoGP circuit last year. What does a month in the life of Colin Edwards look like now?**

**CE:** This year is nuts. I wish I was racing again *[laughs]*. This month I just came from [the U.S. MotoGP in] Austin, where I was wearing two hats for MotoAmerica, which is the national stuff, and BT Sports back in England, walking around with a big ol' battery pack and microphone and interviewing people for TV. And then I had to test yesterday [for Yamaha]. Last month was easy. Take the kids to school, hang out with the wife, go to lunch, but when the season rolls around, it's crazy. And she knows — she's been with me for 24 years, so knows that when it gets crazy, it gets crazy.

**You've been in the sport longer than just about anyone. How did you avoid getting burned out?**

**CE:** Shit, I burn out on everything



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I've ever tried! [Laughs.] I'm like the six-month guy: I'll go hardcore, four hours a day, spending time doing just that one thing and after six months, I'm good enough at it to where I'll move on. In terms of my career, I rode motocross from age 3 to 14, and when I hit 14 I was burned out. I'd won national championships and was starting to get some hair on my balls so decided I was done. Then at 16 I saw a guy who used to dominate on the motocross circuit and he was winning road races, so I thought, shit if he can do it then I know I can. It turned out that once I got back on, I was fast, and the rest is history.

**Do you think you'll get burned out on firearms?**

**CE:** I think that if I was going to, I'd be burned out now. Guns are always something I can come back to and have fun with. And you can always buy new shit. I'll be bringing an issue of RECOIL with me to Argentina tomorrow for ideas.

**What are your favorite guns in the collection?**

**CE:** Out to 700 yards, my wife's 6.5x47 Lapua. That thing is just a tack driver.

Edwards and Rossi swap riding tips while commentator Jonathan Green looks on. Edwards outfits his school bikes with street tires in order to get students used to a lack of traction.

Out to a thousand, I have a 260 Ackley Improved built by JBJ Custom Guns — he's an old redneck dude out in the woods, but he builds some good stuff. I would like to build up a Surgeon action one day, but I'm still waiting. Beyond a thousand, I like my 338 Edge. I pulled it out of the case last time I was at my buddy's place and hit a 20-inch plate at 1,400 yards three times in a row — I was happy with that.

**Have you introduced your kids to guns?**

**CE:** Of course! All my kids shoot. We come out here, and they shoot .22s and I've got a little .25 handgun my daughter likes to shoot. And here's a PSA: the more you teach kids about guns, the safer they'll be. Back at home, they won't even touch them. They know where the guns are and that if they wanted to they could go grab it, but they also know they can't. There's no curiosity factor because they've shot them on the range.

**For our readers who don't follow bike racing, what does a race season look like from the rider's perspective?**

**CE:** Most of the guys out there, this has been their passion since they were kids. It's a full commitment. If someone was to decide at 14 that "Hey, I'm going to race motorcycles," well it doesn't work like that. The MotoGP circuit is f#cking tough. You have 18 races, with only two of them in the USA, so for the others, you're gone all the time. You race back-to-back weekends at the start of the season, with a little break where the schedule goes to week on, week off,







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everyone seems to like. [Laughs.] Then there's testing. I ride the test bike for Valentino and Jorge, and we're currently setting it up for next year where everybody is switching toMichelins, so this is Yamaha's effort to get ahead of the curve. Plus there's my personal relationship with Michelin. I won two world championships on their tires, so maybe we can influence development to show that Yamaha is the way to go.

**Then there's this school you've built up.**

**CE:** Yeah, I didn't want to fade away without passing on some of the knowledge I've gained in 38 years of riding motorcycles.

**Some of us at RECOIL also teach, and we've got to assume it's the same in your world: People make the same mistakes on every course and they can get the same information from a book, but being corrected by a world champion means they're more likely to retain it.**

**CE:** We leave here after a camp and all

then Japan, Malaysia, and Australia are back to back again. There's no calling in sick, that doesn't work. I've raced with the flu so many times I've lost count; just keep going. Everyone thinks it's a dream job and it is, I love it. But it's tough on a family and trying to raise kids; that's real tough.

**There's also the potential for death or serious injury.**

**CE:** Yeah, I was involved in the Simoncelli crash; he lost his life, and that happens. The thing is, if you look at the motocross side, there are 10,000 people who race motocross and weekly — somebody will lose their life. The problem with road racing is that there's such a small group of people who do it, when someone dies or there's a tragic accident, it's headline news and the media is like, "They're going 200 miles an hour — they must be crazy!" I've ridden motocross, and I've done road racing, and the truth is road racing is safer. You crash on a MX bike and that shit hurts and always will.

What you thinking about? Oh, I dunno, guns and bikes and stuff...

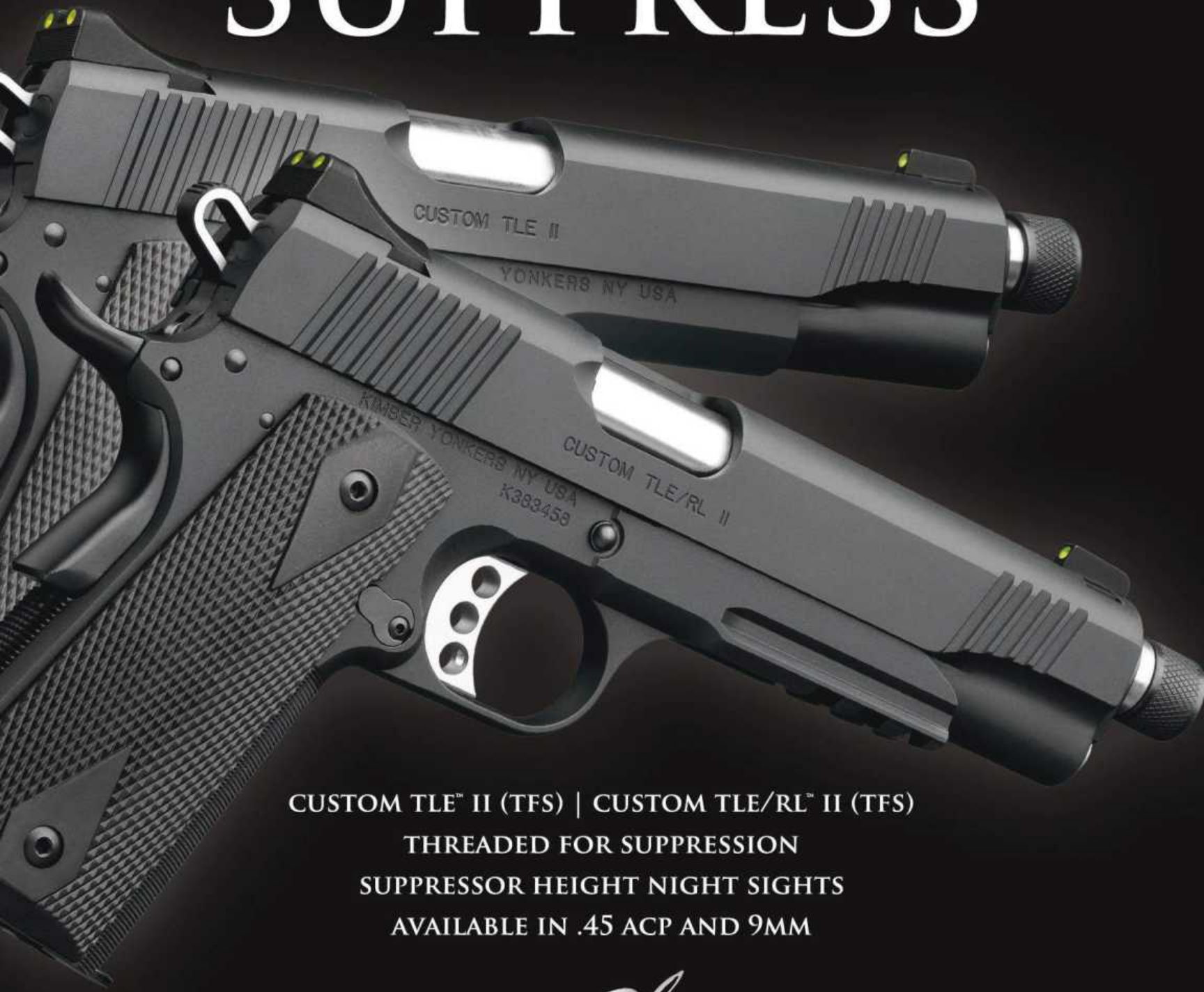
**So where does Colin Edwards go from here?**

**CE:** Oh, I don't know. Talking on TV and making up bullshit stories that





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the instructors are like, "Holy shit, we pulled it off again," and then we go, "You know what? That was the best camp ever." But yes, we see the same mistakes over and over. As an instructor the greatest reward is seeing the students at the end and they've gone from no confidence, worried they're going to crash their brains out, and then on the final day they're getting all aggressive and saying "C'mon! One more superpole lap!" And to see that is awesome.

**Despite it being a motorcycle camp, the students also get to shoot guns, right?**

**CE:** Probably 40 to 50 percent of our clientele here are Europeans, and usually there are at least three or four people who have never even seen a gun in the flesh, so we start everybody out on a .22 pistol. One year we had a 14-year-old girl who didn't want to shoot any of the guns on the first three days, but when we brought out the .50 BMG she just kinda shrugged and said, "Sure, I'll shoot it." The only motivation she had was to Facebook that shit, but hey, it got her shooting. 

## COLIN EDWARDS

**AGE:**  
41

**FAMILY:**  
Wife and three kids

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FIREARMS:**

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BMG rifle

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Ackley Improved  
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2002

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to 2014

Suzuka 8 Hours  
winner 1996, 2000,  
2002







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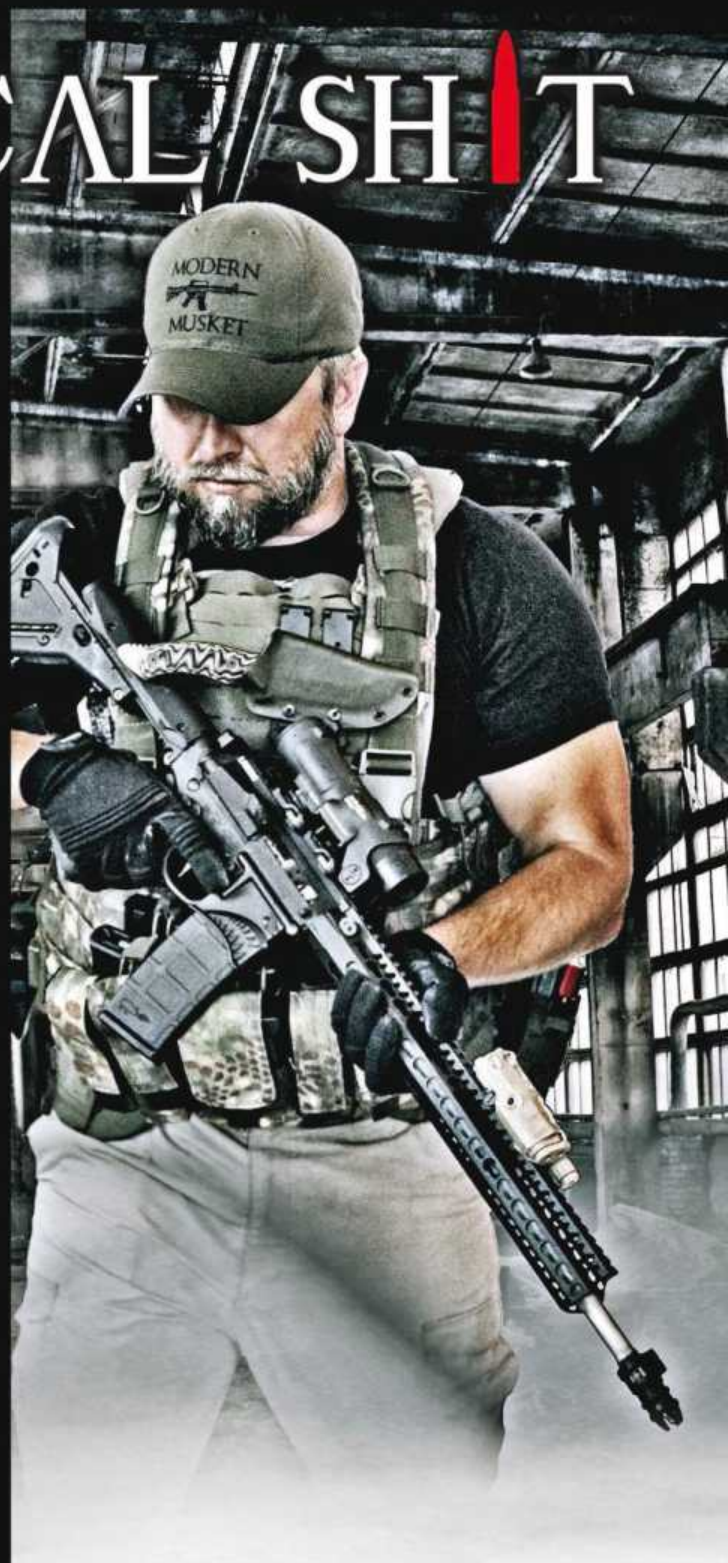
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# BELTING IT OUT

## DEPENDABLE SUPPORT FOR YOUR FIRST-LINE GEAR

BY ROB CURTIS

Belts are the cheap cotton socks of the tactical world. Most of us grew up wearing bottom-rung stuff for so long we got used to those 12-pack athlete's-foot generators and scoffed at shelling out for the good merino wool versions.

The same psychology affects the way we buy belts. We bought the handgun, we *need* a holster for it, but a belt? We have a few of those already! And so it goes. It's so easy to give in to human nature and continue using the same comfortable belt we've had since high school instead of paying for a good gun belt.

Belts are a critical piece of first-line gear. Whether forming the basis of a concealed-carry setup or supplementing a combat fighting load, the last thing anyone wants securing their gear is a limp belt from a menswear department.

Mean Gene makes the meanest leather on the market. This is his 1.5-inch Leather Victory Aegis Belt holding up a Salient Tier One G19 in a Raven Concealment Eidolon holster in AIWB configuration. It's \$125 as shown with a bronze laser-engraved buckle, brown thread, and double stitching.





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## CONCEALED CARRY

With a typical concealed-carry setup for everyday carry (EDC), a belt bears the weight of at least a firearm and a holster. Add the weight of a spare magazine, flashlight, pocketknife, phone, keys, and any other pocketfare, and you've got a few pounds riding on your hips.

An average department store belt is a flaccid, 1.25-inch to 1.5-inch-wide fashion accessory. It features a light-duty buckle and is held together with a single, cheap rivet or the least amount of stitching needed to survive an easy life holding up a pair of Dockers. There are many ways a cheap belt will fail. Under load, a poorly configured buckle prong can rotate on its shaft and allow it to slip behind the buckle frame; cast hooks on plate buckles can snap; straps can tear and strap holes can elongate; friction belts with straps that are too thin or too slick for the friction bar will slip.

And that's just the ways the belt will come apart. A crap belt can compromise your ability to fight in other ways. A belt without enough torsional stiffness can allow an IWB holster to rotate outward and down, potentially dumping a pistol or giving access to an adversary during a fight.

A good EDC belt will fit through common belt loops, typically 1.5 to 1.75 inches, be stiff enough to prevent a pistol holster from rotating or sagging, and comfortably distribute the weight of your carry items evenly around your waist.

Leather and nylon webbing are the two most popular strapping materials. A single layer of natural hide is rarely stiff enough to carry a gun; two layers sewn together with grains opposing works for a gun belt. Some types of leather are naturally stiff, such as horsehide, while others are more supple and benefit from the use of a stiffening layer between the inside and

outside layers of hide. This is usually a strip of plastic or a length of resin-impregnated nylon webbing, commonly called SCUBA webbing.

Synthetic belts are generally made from several layers of nylon webbing. Nylon is very strong, and it doesn't slip through friction systems as easily as slick polyester webbing. The essence of a stiff nylon gun belt is a base layer of SCUBA webbing, sometimes two, laminated to an outer layer of regular nylon webbing that can be fed through a buckle. Variations include layers of decorative webbing, PALS webbing for attaching pouches, quick-release buckles, and inward-facing material, such as Velcro, that can increase friction against the waist and prevent the belt from spinning.

## TACTICAL BELTS

Somewhere between concealed carry and full-on battle belts is a range of belts meant to carry gear — with a few even acting as life-support equipment. These micro battle belts are leveled-up, concealed-carry nylon belts that fit through the belt loops on a pair of jeans; they just don't look like they belong in polite society. Your definition of polite may differ from others, so don't get bogged down in the label.

## BATTLE BELTS

Outside of concealed carry, the argument for a sturdy, well thought-out belt is just as important in the tactical realm. Real estate on a plate carrier is at a premium, so moving gear to a belt makes sense. IFAKs, pistol mags, dump pouches, and admin tools are still within reach, but not in the way when belt mounted.

One- and two-piece battle belts have exploded in popularity in the past few years. Large, PALS-equipped battle belts are still popular, but narrower micro battle belts have gained popularity since they still carry





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MOLLE gear without the bulk and weight of their larger, but sometimes more comfortable, siblings. If you're considering a full-size, PALS-equipped battle belt for use on the range or in the field, understand that most are not true belts despite their name. They are sold as padded channels that require a separate inner belt. And, that's in addition to the base belt you'll need to hold up your pants.

Dale Drowne has worn a gun daily in one kind of belt or another for 19 years as a police officer, a SWAT team member, and an Army National Guard infantryman NCO with a year in Afghanistan. Drowne suggests making sure your belt isn't so tall that it interferes with body armor and causes mobility issues. Padding is great, but it adds bulk, he says, and can decrease ventilation. Comfort considerations call for a rigid platform that distributes weight and spacer mesh or ventilation channels that prevent your midsection from becoming a squishy swamp.

Just be conscious of your mission when choosing what goes on your belt. "Thigh rigs weren't really good in MRAP

seats," says Drowne as an example. They stick out and get caught up on doors, gear, and seatbelts.

To make matters worse, he says soldiers usually didn't wear drop-leg rigs properly. They often wore them too low, and the guys would cinch the leg strap tighter and tighter to keep the pistol from swinging around while running. So, take some time to get your gear set up properly for comfort and safety sake.

Look for cutouts or access channels that allow holster or drop-leg platforms to reach the inner belt. And, speaking of inner belts, some battle belts are available with a high-friction inner face or a Velcro inner lining that attaches to a separate thin, buckle-less base belt worn through your pant loops. These linings help prevent the outer belt from spinning around your waist in a retention struggle.

### COMPETITION RIGS

If you're remotely serious about competition shooting, a good belt will keep your pistol and magazines where you expect to find them and provide

the basis for a consistent draw and efficient reloads. Start with a solid concealed-carry-style belt and move up to a purpose-built competition rig as you gain experience.

The ability to reconfigure a belt on the fly with different amounts of pistol magazine, rifle magazine, and shotgun shell carriers is important to successful multi-gun competitors. Barry Dueck, nationally ranked three-gun shooter and IPSC grand master, says you can't have enough flexibility when it comes to competition loadouts.

When shooting in Heavy Optics Division, his standard equipment list for a match is four pistol mag pouches, nine four-round shot-shell caddies, four quad-load carriers, and three rifle mag pouches. He won't use all those at the same time, but sets up his belt using Safariland ELS modular carriers for each stage.

"I set my gear up for each stage to have an extra magazine as a backup," he says, "in case I discard a magazine clearing a malfunction or something goes wrong and I'm shooting extra, unplanned rounds."







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# BUCKLE UP

Belt buckles have evolved from conventional framed prong and plate buckles into impressive load-bearing devices. The most recognizable metal buckles on the tactical market are, from left, the Ares Aegis buckle, the JBC Corp. Raptor buckle, and the AustriaAlpin Cobra buckle. Simple slide lock and friction buckles are popular, reliable, and inexpensive. Injection-molded plastic side-release buckles — such as those from ITW Nexus or National Molding — are also commonly used where weight and cost are a concern. Each has its pros and cons when compared to the old-school prong and frame buckle.

The original Cobra buckle was designed as a load-rated device, capable of holding thousands of pounds of weight in industrial, transportation, nautical, aeronautical, and tactical rigging systems. The company even produced a version of the side-release stab buckle for use in U.S. military MRAP vehicle seatbelts. The buckle's key features are its strength, ease of use and interoperability with other Cobra buckles of different size. All this in addition to its critical safety feature — it will not open, accidentally or otherwise, if there's weight on the buckle. It's also heavy, expensive and if you crank it tight enough, you'll need two hands to release the buckle. AustriaAlpin teamed up

with ITW to produce a polymer version of the Cobra called the GT Cobra that sheds cost, weight, and working strength, but maintains all other features. It's also a blessing when going through metal detectors.

The JBC Corp. Raptor buckle was created specifically as a made-in-America alternative to the Austrian-made Cobra buckle. The Raptor's wider-but-softer edge profile means it doesn't print through covering layers as much as the boxy Cobra. It also bears weight, but there is an ongoing slap fight between AustriaAlpin and JBC Corp. about weight bearing claims. AustriaAlpin commissioned a lab to test the breaking strength of both products and you can read the results of their test online at [privatebloggins.ca](http://privatebloggins.ca).

Just keep in mind one thing if you go with either of these weight bearing buckles — even if the buckle has a weight rating, it doesn't mean the belt system that it's part of is weight rated as life support gear. Further, any belt without leg loops is not a safe alternative to a harness. A loop around your waist can become a crushing ring around your chest in a shock-arrested fall. Dangling from a line with a constricted chest is an adrenaline-fueled route to suffocation. Some military units use rigger's belts instead of four-point harnesses in gun cupolas because

they are faster to get on and off, but they aren't as safe as a full-body harness. Weight rated riggers belts alone are best used in low-angle work and in some static safety rigging systems with proper training.

The Ares Aegis buckle is a beefed-up box buckle with a tension bar holding the belt. It's similar in appearance and operation to what you might have worn as part of a Boy Scout uniform. It's far, far stronger, though. It's made from bead-blasted 17-4PH stainless steel that not only lasts forever and looks good, it's mean enough to clear a path out of a mosh pit when swung from the end of a belt in wide circles.

Ares made the Aegis buckle as an alternative to the very tactical looking Cobra buckle. When matched with the proper strap, the Aegis buckle blends in with any office or casual attire. Just be aware that the belt has to be pulled tight then drawn back a bit to put tension on the friction bar so it doesn't slip. Lastly, the front of the Aegis is a wonderful canvas for a laser-engraved logo.

There are miles of great belts on the market, and we've collected a few samples in an attempt to show the girth of options you're facing. Choosing a belt isn't a cinch. Gird yourself and read up — we don't want you wasting (wasting!) your money on the wrong belt.



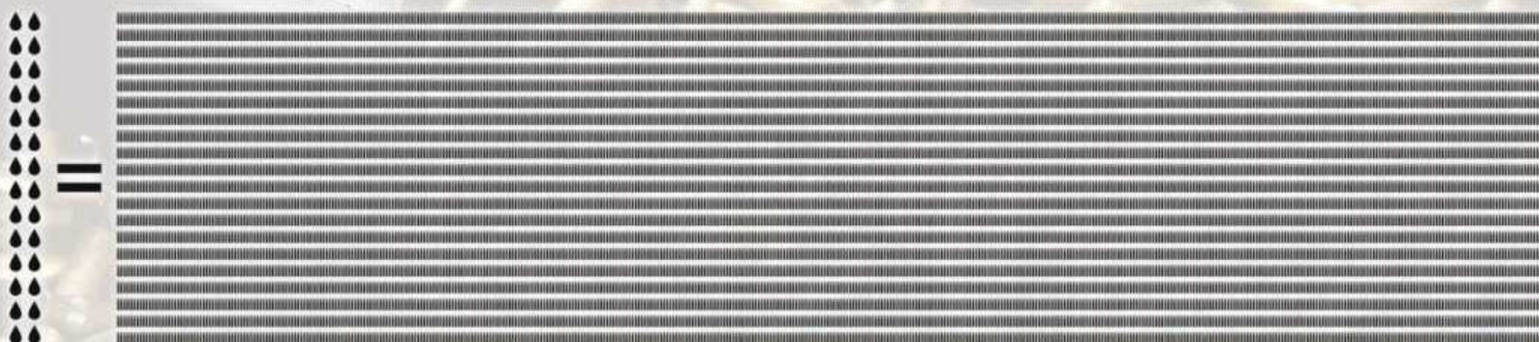
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### BASICS:

Full-size battle belt with vented mesh and HDPE stiffener.

### COLORS:

Black, coyote brown, MultiCam, ranger green

### MSRP:

\$105 (shown with inner FirstSpear Assaulters Gun Belt, \$64)

### URL:

[www.velsyst.com](http://www.velsyst.com)

### 411:

The original Velocity OUB is a simple, comfortable take on the battle belt. It's based around a three-dimensionally-formed HDPE sheet that's anatomically shaped and vented for comfort. In addition to the vented core, spacer mesh on the inside helps promote airflow. Interrupted PALS columns on each hip allow a place for a holster to attach directly to the inner belt, which isn't supplied. The OUB shown is the author's setup using a FirstSpear 1.75-inch Assaulters Gun Belt as an inner belt.



## VELOCITY SYSTEMS OPERATOR UTILITY BELT GEN1

## TYR TACTICAL BROKOS BELT



### BASICS:

Tapered construction using Tyr Tactical PV material with optional soft armor.

### COLORS:

Black, coyote brown, MultiCam, ranger green

### MSRP:

\$160

### URL:

[www.tyrtactical.com](http://www.tyrtactical.com)

### 411:

The original Brokos belt was developed by Kyle Lamb and Dan Brokos as a battle belt with slits between sections of PALS webbing to allow an inner belt to run outboard and weave through a holster. Tyr Tactical is one of the original manufacturers of the design and developed this version featuring their own Pluma Vires material. It's a laminate of 500-denier Cordura and 200-denier Kevlar in an ultra-tight weave to maximize abrasion and tear resistance. As a result, the Tyr Brokos belt is featherweight and man-of-steel strong. The belt tapers from 4 inches around the hips to 6 inches wide at the back and incorporates suspender hangers for increased comfort with heavier loads.

114

### BASICS:

Complete belt system with three configurations that comes with non-load rated inner belt and pants belt. (1)

### COLORS:

Black, coyote brown, MultiCam, ranger green

### MSRP:

\$112

### URL:

[www.cryeprecision.com](http://www.cryeprecision.com)

### 411:

The MRB is a low-profile, unpadded battle belt that comes with everything you need to run the belt through or over your pant belt loops. It consists of a PALS sleeve, main belt, and loop-lined inner belt. The option to run the inner belt through the belt loops gives excellent modularity and reduced bulk while allowing you to peel away and drop the PALS belt without unthreading anything. Running the entire MRB over a pants belt is a strong, fast, and simple way to wear the system. As a third option, the main belt can be replaced with a load rated riggers belt to tie into an anchor system.



## CRYE PRECISION MODULAR RIGGER'S BELT



## HIGH SPEED GEAR INCORPORATED SLIMGRIP BELT



### BASICS:

3-inch battle belt with non-slip neoprene liner and optional (included) HDPE stiffener.

### COLORS:

Black, coyote brown, olive drab, MultiCam, Kryptek Highland, woodland camo, wolf grey

### MSRP:

\$79 (\$151 as shown w/ 1.5-inch Rigger Belt \$72)

### URL:

[www.highspeedgear.com](http://www.highspeedgear.com)

### 411:

Unlike any other battle belt, HSGI's SlimGrip series belts use a neoprene liner. The material does two jobs, combining grip and padding. The neoprene holds the belt in place during dynamic movement, and the 3-inch uniform height keeps PALS mounted accessories from interfering with body armor. There are channels over the hips to attach holsters and drop-leg platforms to an inner belt. The channel is Velcro lined to retain a Velcro lined main belt, such as HSGI's own 1.5-inch Rigger Belt (shown, not included).



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### BASICS:

Load supporting belt with tie-in loop at six o'clock and AustriaAlpin Cobra Buckle.

### COLORS:

Black, coyote brown, MultiCam, ranger green

### MSRP:

\$140 (\$180 as shown w/ Kilo 727 Inner Belt \$40)

### URL:

[www.kilo727.com](http://www.kilo727.com)

### 411:

The Kilo 727 belt system stands out for its placement of the riggers tie in loop at the 6 o'clock position (2) instead of around the front of the belt. Tying in at the rear won't interfere with whatever's going on up front, and if you've ever worked out of a helo, you'll appreciate your safety line not spinning you around every time you load it. The outer belt is a sandwich of overbuilt layers of nylon. Not the stiffest belt, but stiff enough for real work and flexible enough for comfort. Stiffness and comfort increase with the use of the 1.7-inch wide, padded, Kilo727 inner belt (1).



## KILO727 ASSAULT BELT

## VOLUND GEARWORKS MICRO BATTLE BELT



### BASICS:

Cobra belt with many custom options that can carry MOLLE gear horizontally or vertically. It is stiff, stiff, stiff!

### COLORS:

Black, coyote brown, Kryptek Highlander, Kryptek Typhon, MultiCam, ranger green, wolf gray

### MSRP:

\$110 (\$125 as shown with Velcro hook lining)

### URL:

[store.volundgearworks.com](http://store.volundgearworks.com)  
[www.bawidamann.com](http://www.bawidamann.com)

### 411:

Two layers of 2-inch scuba webbing, faced with nylon webbing and more nylon folded and sewn to form PALS channels makes the Volund (pronounced Vall-OOND) Gearworks Micro Battle Belt perhaps the stiffest belt we've held. A set of vertical loops allow items such as zip-cuffs to be threaded through the belt or some smaller MOLLE gear to be mounted horizontally. Ours wears a Bawidamann Blades Hrud fixed blade knife with sheath and a pair of HSGI TACO rifle mag pouches attached using Bawidamann's new PUP MOLLE QD Bikini Straps (\$18).

### BASICS:

One of the smallest Cobra belt setups for carrying PALS-compatible gear.

### COLORS:

Black, coyote brown, Kryptek Highlander, Kryptek Typhon, wolf grey

### MSRP:

\$70

### URL:

[www.greyghostgear.com](http://www.greyghostgear.com)

### 411:

1.5 inches wide, the Son of Paladin is the slimmest belt set up to carry PALS-compatible pouches. It's a single layer of SCUBA webbing sandwiched by a colored nylon webbing on both sides with a 1-inch strip of webbing for PALS attachment. Velcro panels attach the overlapping ends and keep them from scissoring. Fits in common belt loops. It's a great option to add load carriage to street clothes. But, once pouches are threaded, the belt isn't coming off the pants in a hurry.



## GREY GHOST GEAR SON OF PALADIN BELT

## TYR TACTICAL GUNFIGHTER BELT-E



### 411:

The Gunfighter Belt walks the line between capable load carriage and a belt that can fit through 2-inch uniform belt loops. The novel webbing arrangement allows the attachment of full-size PALS or compatible, threaded belt loop or snap-over gear using almost the entire circumference of the belt. Worn as a low-profile war belt with the included antimicrobial, flame-retardant mesh liner, the belt is comfortable and stable enough to easily carry a pistol, mags, a dump pouch, and a med kit. Pull the liner and press the belt against a Velcro inner belt, and you'll have even more stability.

### BASICS:

Carry as much gear as a full size battle belt in half the space with most of the comfort.

### COLORS:

Black, coyote brown, MultiCam, ranger green

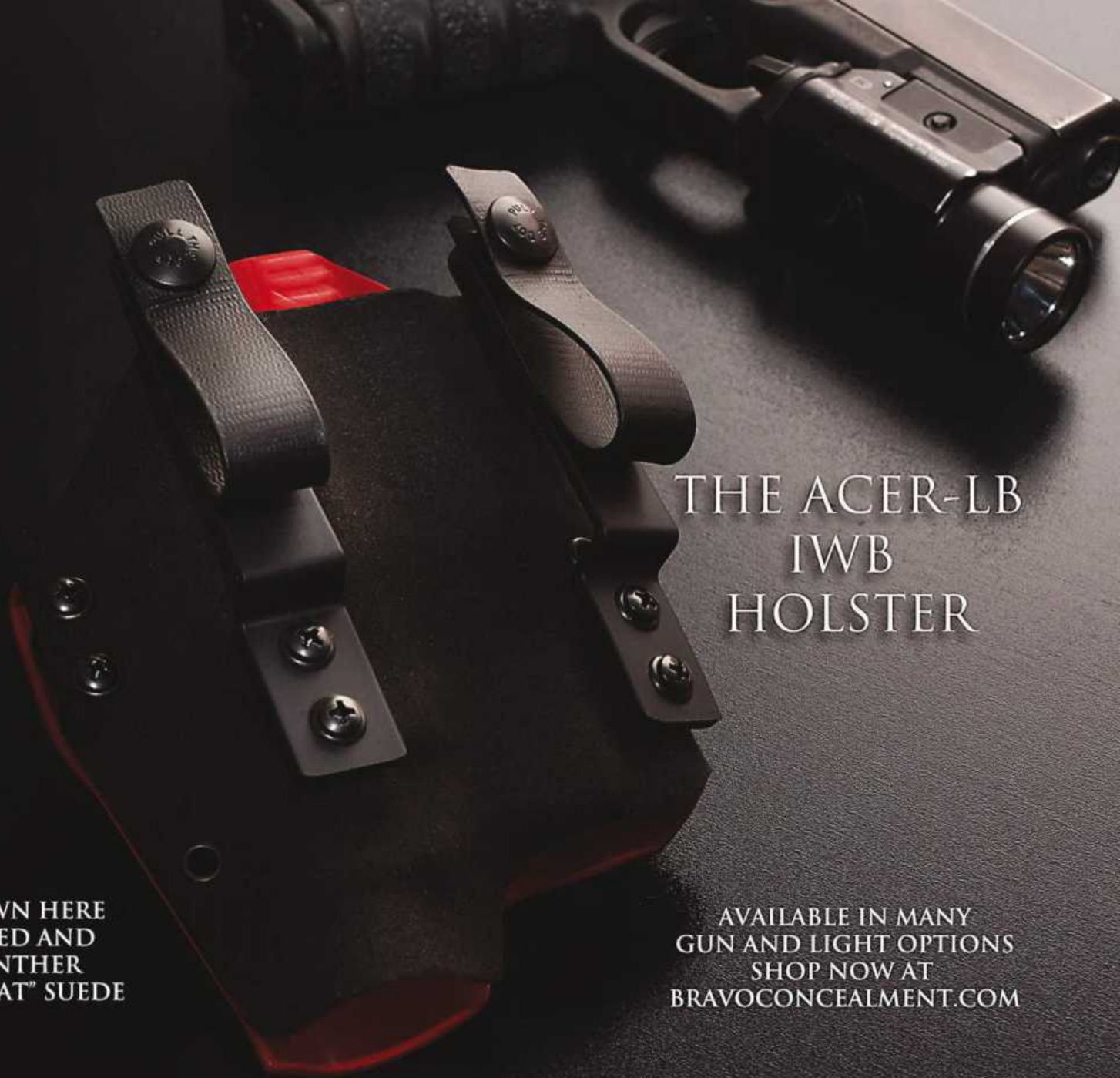
### MSRP:

\$115

### URL:

[www.tyrtactical.com](http://www.tyrtactical.com)





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### BASICS:

Go-to everyday wear Cobra belt with ultimate stiffness and durability.

### COLORS:

Custom choices based on black, coyote brown, tan, wolf grey

### MSRP:

\$65

### URL:

[www.jonestactical.com](http://www.jonestactical.com)

### 411:

The Jones Tactical 1.5-inch EDB brings the ease and utility of the Cobra Buckle into the realm of casual wear. With a double layer of SCUBA webbing, the belt is stiff as hell, easily capable of carrying any full size pistol on the market with a gross of spare mags. It may even hold up an AR pistol, if you can find a holster for one. The 1-inch Cobra buckle, heavy-duty thread, and bomber stitching might make you think this is a load-rated belt, but it isn't. The sealed ends and Velcro tab on the loose end make for a neat appearance. The author's worn this belt as his daily carry belt for six years without so much as a frayed stitch.



## JONES TACTICAL 1.5-INCH EVERYDAY BELT V1

## FIRSTSPEAR TACTICAL DRESS BELT 6/12



### BASICS:

A full spectrum battle belt for the boardroom PSD or battlefield.

### COLORS:

Any shade of black

### MSRP:

\$140 (\$196 as shown with FirstSpear Line One - BioThane belt)

### URL:

[www.first-spear.com](http://www.first-spear.com)

### 411:

Low-visibility setups usually carry a significant tradeoff in load carriage ability and comfort. But, the Tactical Dress Belt is a full-size battle belt that thinks it's a concealed-carry rig. The laser cut 6/12 PALS is lightweight and thin, but the rigid core offers plenty of stability. The full-size PALS field means comfort when carrying large, heavy gear. When worn with a suitable inner belt, such as the FirstSpear Line One belt (1) and cover garment, this belt supports a pistol and battle rifle loadout, first-aid gear, restraints, and anything else you can fit. The all black appearance blends in urban formal to casual settings.

### BASICS:

Flat, ultra light-weight load-rated comfort suitable for rigging and more.

### COLORS:

Black, coyote, wolf

### MSRP:

\$109

### URL:

[leaf.arcteryx.com](http://leaf.arcteryx.com)

### 411:

The H-150 came about when Arc'teryx found out its customers were cutting the leg loops from its climbing harnesses and using it as a rigger's belt. The basis of Arc'teryx's high-end climbing harnesses is Warp Strength technology. Stripping the vertical strands from the waist-belt webbing, separating the horizontal strands out to spread the load over a larger area, and encasing the result in a thin, tough material makes for an ultra lightweight, extremely comfortable belt that's an EN certified fall-arresting device when used alone. It's also a rated climbing harness when used with the Arc'teryx IE-70 accessory leg loop (\$34) and approved hardware. The H-150's not nearly as stiff as belt with a SCUBA webbing core, but it can support a pistol and mags, and gets our vote as the most comfortable rigger's belt on the planet.



## ARC'TERYX H-150 RIGGER'S BELT

## VERTX RAPTOR BELT



### 411:

Using a single sheet of HDPE, the Raptor Belt is stiff enough to handle range gear. But, it's not near as stiff as belts that use two layers of SCUBA webbing. Still, at 2 inches wide, the belt is comfortable and will fit through uniform pants, if not a pair of jeans. The stiffener runs the circumference of the belt with a split at the spine that lets the belt conform to the wearer's hips.

### BASICS:

2-inch wide reinforced nylon belt with Raptor buckle.

### COLORS:

Black, earth, olive drab green

### MSRP:

\$79

### URL:

[www.wearvertx.com](http://www.wearvertx.com)





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### BASICS:

1.5-inch double layered leather with nylon webbing reinforcement looks rich and feels like an heirloom in the making.

### COLORS:

Black, brown, chocolate with many custom options available

### MSRP:

\$115 (\$125 as shown with double stitching)

### URL:

[www.meangeneleather.com](http://www.meangeneleather.com)

### 411:

Mean Gene's belts are a labor of love, not profit. The difference is apparent in the details. Laser straight stitching, flawless dye application, burnished edges, and hand polished to near perfection. The icing on the cake is the Aegis buckle, shown here in bronze with a familiar laser engraved logo, showing how the belt flows from black tie to barbecue depending on custom options. Performance is on par with looks. The belt is stiff as a double layered SCUBA belt, but more pliable and comfortable thanks to the leather.



## MEAN GENE LEATHER VICTORY AEGIS BELT

### ARES GEAR

## AEGIS BELT, WITH STAINLESS BUCKLE, BLACK WEBBING

### 411:

As great as they look, Cobra belts scream tactical. Ares came up with the Aegis buckle as an alternative to the tactical look. It's basically the same buckle you had as a Boy Scout, but on steroids. The belt is a couple layers of ultra durable and stiff SCUBA webbing with a nylon webbing veneer sewn over that adds a bit more stiffness. The belt is as stiff as the Jones Tactical but sharper looking. Even the loose end is profiled and heat sealed. The Aegis is the near perfect fusion of looks, performance, and durability for everyday firearm carry.

### BASICS:

The gun belt with a unique look that doesn't scream, "Gun!"

### COLORS:

Black, coyote, grey, MultiCam, ranger green, with options for buckle.

### MSRP:

\$121

### URL:

[www.aresgear.com](http://www.aresgear.com)



### BASICS:

Keep it under wraps using the three hidden pockets in this unreinforced 1.75-inch flame retardant nylon belt.

### COLORS:

Black and red, black and grey

### MSRP:

\$65

### URL:

[www.dynamisalliance.com](http://www.dynamisalliance.com)

### 411:

The belt is designed to carry the basic load of a pistol and mags, with some hidden extras. Three interior pockets can be used to carry small items from a spare key, folded bills, or even a hand-cuff key. One of the pockets is positioned at the very end of the belt such that it can be weighted with loose change and used as a weighted whip in a self-defense scenario. The buckle-less design makes it comfortable and perfect for combatives. Worn tight, the limp belt will support a pistol IWB, but threading it through a belt loop holster may not produce the most stable platform.



## DYNAMIS LOW PRO BELT

## COMPETITION BELT

### SAFARILAND

## MODEL 032 ELS COMPETITION BELT 1.75-INCH

### PARTICULARS:

The first and last word in competition belts using synthetic materials, unrivaled modularity and professional level durability.

### COLORS:

Black

### MSRP:

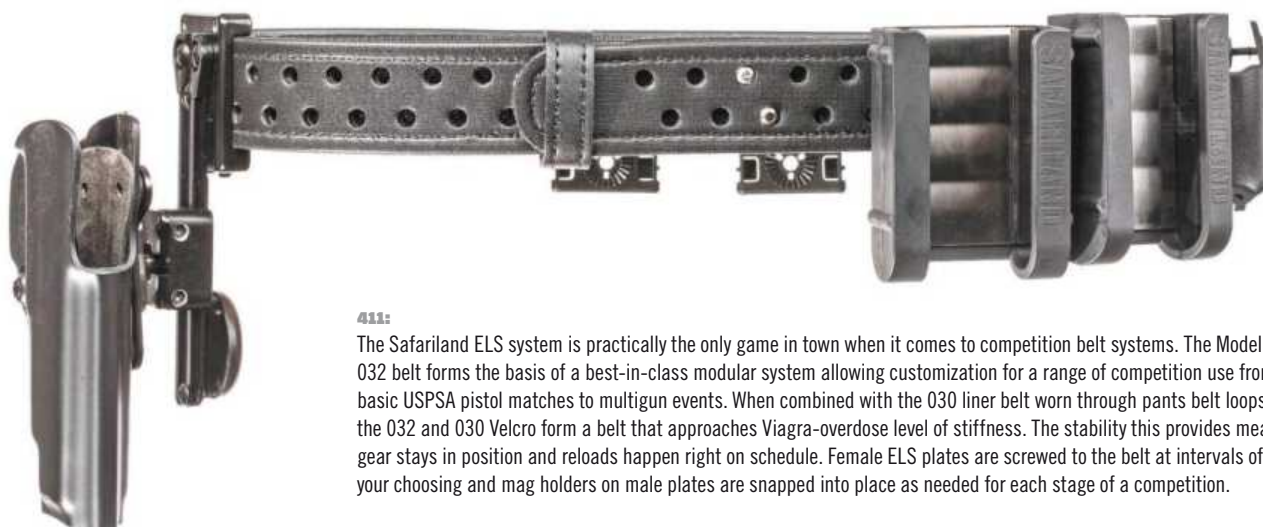
\$56 (\$297 as shown w/ Model 030 Competition Underbelt, Loop Liner \$19, USPSA Holster Kit \$86, Model 5198 Holster \$39, Model 773 (pistol mag) \$29, Model 774 (AR15 mag) pouches \$18, Model 085 Shotgun Shell Carrier \$30, All mounted with ELS hardware.)

### URL:

[www.safariland.com](http://www.safariland.com)

### 411:

The Safariland ELS system is practically the only game in town when it comes to competition belt systems. The Model 032 belt forms the basis of a best-in-class modular system allowing customization for a range of competition use from basic USPSA pistol matches to multigun events. When combined with the 030 liner belt worn through pants belt loops, the 032 and 030 Velcro form a belt that approaches Viagra-overdose level of stiffness. The stability this provides means gear stays in position and reloads happen right on schedule. Female ELS plates are screwed to the belt at intervals of your choosing and mag holders on male plates are snapped into place as needed for each stage of a competition.





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# MAS





# TIER BLASTER

ANOTHER TRICKED-OUT GLOCK?  
WE TAKE A DEEPER LOOK AT  
THE AGENCY ARMS G34.

BY STEVEN KUO

PHOTOS BY STEVEN KUO AND Q CONCEPTS

Shooters are a passionate bunch. But even within that context, Glocks can be a divisive topic. Folks have long, drawn-out, Ford-versus-Chevy-type Internet battles simply about stock Glocks compared with other handguns. Broach the subject of customized Glocks, and let the flame wars begin. Is a Glock simply a tool? Is it worthwhile to invest in customizations and improvements to a Glock? Does the phrase “lipstick on a pig” come into play at some point? The answers to each one of these questions are, all at once, “Yes,” “No,” “It depends,” and “Who cares?” All guns are fundamentally tools, but they can be much more. Stock Glocks are great, but there’s always room for improvement depending on your intended application and budget. And this is America — if someone is willing to pay an agreed-upon price for a certain product, more power to them!



Due to their inherent design simplicity and massive following, Glocks are similar to the AR-15 platform in their LEGO-like assembly and vibrant ecosystem of aftermarket parts and suppliers. Sights aside, bone-stock Glocks are a wonderful choice for many people. With a little bit of research and mechanical aptitude, you can easily customize your Glock — we'd start with the sights, then consider tuning (see Issue 14) or replacing the trigger. Depending on your preference, you could try different types of mag releases, slide stops, and other drop-in parts.

Beyond that, you start progressing into more complicated waters with machine work, stippling (see Issue 1), and so forth — and mild to wild off-the-shelf components are widely available now. However, you'd be well advised to have a good technical understanding if you start adjusting weights, materials, springs, internals, etc. How many of us have been at the range, a class, or a

Sporting a custom Cerakote finish, our test gun featured Agency Arms' full suite of slide and framework.

match with a buddy who pulls out his trusty Glock, only to suffer constant problems. Asking him about it often results in a reply along the lines of, "Well, last night, I had it on my workbench, and I..."

### JOINING THE AGENCY

Agency Arms is a relatively young enterprise, having come onto the scene at the beginning of this year, but its founders have been in the industry for quite some time. Their initial focus is on the Glock platform — they've designed their own flat-face trigger and low-profile magwell, and they do slide work, frame work, trigger work, and full builds.

It seems there's no end of custom Glock builders, spanning the gamut from economical to astronomical. Agency Arms has taken an approach of offering several options, but not a bewildering array, allowing customers to mix and match slide, frame, and

trigger work. Their design philosophy is to enhance the functionality of the basic Glock while retaining maximum reliability for duty and self-defense applications. They work on customer-supplied weapons, with a focus on reasonable turnaround times, open communication (you can log on to their website to track the progress of your build), strong customer service, and sense of community. Their services are by no means cheap, but others charge more. For example, a full build on a customer-supplied Glock 17 or 19 runs \$1,400.

The Accelerator Cut ahead of the takedown lever was nicely contoured for the support thumb to help with recoil management.





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## THE AGENCY WAY

Michael Parks, a former Marine and current police officer, is one of the principals of Agency Arms. We got our grubby hands on one of his personal guns to run through its paces. As we walk through the details of their builds, you'll see their overall philosophy reflected.

Agency offers three types of slide modifications, depending on your preference and application (e.g. whether you plan to utilize a mini red dot sight):

► **Urban Combat:** Lightest option, with three window cuts (top and side), additional weight reduction, front and rear serrations, and mini red-dot cut with aluminum Agency Battle Plate cover.

► **Hybrid Special:** One top window cut, additional weight reduction, front and rear serrations, and mini red-dot cut with Agency Battle Plate cover.

► **Field Battle:** Heaviest option with no window cuts. Includes additional weight reduction, front and rear serrations, and mini red-dot cut with Agency Battle Plate cover.

Our test gun started life as a 9mm Gen4 G34 and was given the Urban Combat treatment. A stock Gen4 G34 slide assembly weighs 18.7 ounces. Our Urban Combat assembly (including the Trijicon RMR) weighed in about an ounce lighter at 17.5 ounces. Agency paired the slide with a slightly lighter-than-stock 15-pound recoil spring and a stainless steel guide rod. Comparing the two slides, the machining work is pretty self-evident: material is removed from the sides, side windows are cut cleanly, and the top stock window and ejection port are enlarged. The serrations are quite aggressive, as you can see from the detail photographs — Agency Arms calls them “DNA collectors” as a result.

There are a number of craftsmen who have made Glock frame modifications to a fine art, and Agency is no exception. Their frame work and

grip texturing is both attractive and functional in some unique ways. They remove the finger grooves and undercut the trigger guard so you can grip the weapon as high as possible. The interior of the trigger guard is beveled out with a mill to make it a little more roomy for gloved hands or simian-like booger hooks. The bottom front corner of the trigger guard is also docked, providing another index point for some and aesthetics for others. The most unusual modification is their “Acceler-

ator Cuts” — the side of the frame in front of the takedown lever is reshaped to create modest ledges on either side for the support hand thumb to better clamp down on the frame to enhance recoil control. It's similar in concept to accessories, commonly known as gas pedals that some USPSA competitors have attached to their pistols. Agency's low-profile magazine wells have proven to be a popular item, but a variant for Gen4 Glocks is not yet available, so our test gun didn't have one.

The slide, frame, and custom finishing shown here runs \$1,525 on a customer-supplied gun.





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Agency may be more widely known for their flat trigger with a hook at the toe as an index point. It's very nicely done, and available for purchase as a drop-in trigger. In keeping with Agency's defensive philosophy, except for the trigger shoe they utilize tuned stock parts in their trigger system, prioritizing reliability above all. An OEM minus connector reduces the trigger pull weight, and a tuned and polished third-gen Glock trigger bar provides a smooth feel.

Different finishing options are available — black nitride, nickel boron, and Cerakote. There's an extra charge for the latter two. Our test gun had a custom "distressed" Cerakote finish, which was quite distinctive, but not to everyone's taste here at RECOIL. Of course, you can specify your desired finish.

## AGENTS IN THE FIELD

Now for the fun part — how did the Agency Arms do at the range? Overall, we ran about a full case of various types of ammo through it. We took it to the range for testing and drills. We also ran it at a local action pistol match with a mixture of hosing and accuracy targets, and passed it around for different shooters to try.



The Urban Combat slide has an enlarged top widow and ejection port, side windows, aggressive serrations, additional weight reduction, and RMR cut.

Overall, the Agency G34 was very refined and well-sorted. This is one of the clear advantages of obtaining a complete build from an accomplished shop. All of their design choices worked together very well.

The frame work was excellent with meticulous detail and unique touches. The trigger guard modifications were great, and the accelerator cut was nicely done. We found its utility to be dependent on the shooter — positioned ahead of the takedown lever, it required some to extend their support thumbs farther forward than they normally do, and one with small hands couldn't comfortably use it at all. Others quite liked everything about it. The stippling could have been more aggressive to help lock in the shooting grip, but it's an understandable trade-off given the emphasis on duty and defensive use.

The trigger felt like a well-tuned OEM setup with reduced travel, a crisp break, and strong reset. Our example consistently broke at just over 4 pounds. Many shooters loved the flat trigger, while some still preferred curved ones. The trigger safety is very low profile — if you're bothered by the Glock's trigger safety nub, you'll

like this one as you'll barely notice it's there. There's only so much that can be done with OEM components, so the trigger snobs amongst us were left wanting a bit and digging around in the parts bins to experiment with combining Agency's flat trigger with other more aggressively modified parts (successfully, we might add).

A Trijicon RM06 RMR red dot was perched on our test gun, melted nicely into the slide. A set of tall Trijicon suppressor night sights were co-witnessed with the optic. It's well known that it takes a lot of time behind the gun to become accustomed to a slide-mounted red dot. Those in our group who normally shoot iron sights found their match results suffering as a result. The Open Division shooter in our group loved it, easily tracking the red dot (even though he normally runs a frame-mounted optic on his STI) and ripping off blazing double taps with abandon. Our USPSA limited division







[WWW.SOETACTICALGEAR.COM](http://WWW.SOETACTICALGEAR.COM)



# AGENCY ARMS GLOCK 34 URBAN



URL  
[www.agencyarms.com](http://www.agencyarms.com)



	CALIBER 9mm
	BARREL LENGTH 5.31 inches
	OVERALL LENGTH 8.74 inches
	WEIGHT (EMPTY) 1.4 pounds
	MAGAZINE CAPACITY 17 rounds



MSRP  
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ACCESSORIES  
Trijicon RM06 RMR \$708  
Trijicon Suppressor Sights \$148



PRICE AS FEATURED  
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second stage of the match, the screws had backed out and the RMR flopped out. Fortunately, we had extra screws and were quickly back in the game. Remember, this was Mike's personal gun, rather than one destined for a customer, so we don't hold this against Agency.

Out of almost 1,000 rounds of American Eagle 124-grain and 147-grain, Remington 147-grain, CCI Blazer 115-grain, and Fiocchi 115-grain and 124-grain ammo, we had a single failure to feed. It was during a course of fire with mixed magazines and was cleared reflexively, so we weren't able to identify which lot of ammo it was nor the specific issue, but it didn't happen again.

We very much enjoyed our time with the Agency Arms G34 and gazed longingly at our bank accounts, wishing they weren't so barren. If you don't believe Glocks are worthy of customization, the Agency Arms Glock isn't for you. If you know you can put together your own piece of polymer art for a lot less moolah, by all means, do it. But if you want a refined, custom Glock out of the box and don't mind spending the scratch for the privilege, check out Agency Arms. Judging from their work queue, there's plenty of people in the latter category. ■

Say what you will about custom Glocks; the Agency G34 was refined and fun to shoot.

Grandmaster was annoyed by the dot and the RMR's relatively small window, ending up mostly using the backup irons instead for close targets and only utilizing the dot for precise long shots. In fact, in timed drills at close range, he was slower trying to use the dot than irons. Agency gives you the option of going either way by including the optic cut as part of its slide work.

Just keep in mind that you'll need to

specify and be locked into a particular mounting pattern, though Agency currently only has Battle Plate covers for the RMR cut.

Speaking of mounts, Mike Parks had recently gotten his gun back from being Cerakoted and forgot to Loctite the RMR's mounting screws. Clinging to the slide, the RMR gets the ever-loving crap kicked out of it on every shot. You can guess where this is going — by the







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# THE BEST OFFENSE

## ARM YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT INSURANCE

BY RECOIL STAFF  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY SARAH WATANABE-ROCCO

Unforeseen events can often happen involving the guns we own. You may be forced to fire on an intruder who later sues you for excessive use of force. A gun you could have sworn you locked up might get stolen and used in a shooting or found by a neighbor's child who accidentally injures himself with it. Are these situations really too far-fetched to happen to you? Shouldn't you prepare for them? Time to start thinking about having the right insurance to protect yourself from legal recourse.

The situations that can happen involving a firearm run a wide gamut of possibilities. Don't assume that acting in self-defense will automatically preclude you from potential litigation. Even if you're found innocent in a criminal trial, you may be sued in civil court. Both cases will cost you a great deal of money and time, and are adjudicated under different conditions. The outcome of a criminal case is determined by what's proven beyond a reasonable doubt. The outcome of a civil case, on the other hand, is determined by a preponderance of evidence. Situations of self-defense can also result in the defendant being held in jail pending the outcome of their trial.

### DO YOUR RESEARCH

So, where do you start? No one looks forward to shopping for insurance, especially when you don't know what to ask for or what to avoid.





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Homeowners insurance policies can be limited in provisions that they offer for firearms-related occurrences. When it comes to broadening your existing coverage, it's time you thought about buying additional insurance in the form of a personal liability umbrella policy (PLUP). The coverage a PLUP can offer enhances potential areas of exposure and is usually relatively inexpensive, depending on the amount of coverage you want. Coverage can typically range from \$250,000 to \$25 million. To give you a ballpark idea of cost, for the price of a few boxes of ammo — around \$100 to \$200 a month — you can procure \$1 million to \$5 million dollars worth of coverage that could encompass your home, car, boat, and so on.

Personal liability relates to losses that originate on your property or with your property. For example, a guest falls down your stairs and hurts themselves, or a grand piano that you send

off for repair falls off the truck hauling it and strikes a kid on a bicycle. Depending on various hypothetical factors, these instances would likely be covered by a PLUP.

However, with firearms, do not assume you'll be covered, even in cases where you have demonstrated justifiable self-defense. "Under most, but not all modern homeowners and umbrella policies, if the insured intentionally pulls the trigger there's not going to be any insurance coverage for a claim for injuries by somebody who gets hit by a bullet," says Duke Wahlquist, a California attorney with 25 years of insurance coverage and business litigation experience. "The insured will be running up against typical policy language that will not cover the insured unless the bodily injury results from an accident, and typical language doesn't have an exception for cases in which injury is justifiably rendered in self-defense. Most insurers don't want to pay those claims. Obviously, policy language matters. For instance, California's Courts of Appeal have affirmed coverage denials in shooting cases on the basis that there was no 'accident' and hence no 'occurrence' as the policies define that term."

When it comes to policy language, definitions of terms such as "accident" or "occurrence" can be subjective if they're not specifically defined in the policy and potentially counterintuitive even when they are defined. If you're uncertain about the firearms coverage offered by a company you're prospecting, ask as many questions as you can that specifically relate to your concerns. "Don't try and be a lawyer and interpret policies. Request an agent with at least 20 years of experience. Ask them when coverage would be denied. Ask for examples of denied coverage. Be very specific and pin them down a bit. Make sure they answer everything to your satisfaction before you purchase a policy," says Jason Squires, an Arizona attorney specializing

in criminal defense and civil action.

Shop around with reputable companies that have agents you can speak to directly...not companies where you're wandering in the endless wilderness of websites. If firearms and related incidents are your greatest concern, search for a PLUP policy that specifically covers those areas. Investigate what provisions various companies offer and assess cost versus coverage. Certain companies may insist you get firearms training to bind the coverage. Since this may give you an advantage by showing you're a responsible gun owner during potential litigation, don't scoff at it. "These policies are also great for kids. Your entire fortune may be tied to your children's actions, firearms related or not," says Squires.

How much coverage do you need? As a rule of thumb, "a person should get 10 times their annual salary in coverage," says Squires. In occurrences related to self-defense and accidents, there's no way to accurately forecast a requisite amount of coverage. Even though you might think the chance of needing coverage in those areas is unlikely, if you still have to admit to yourself there's a distinct possibility, best to get as much as you think you can afford. Just as there is in owning a boat, there's a degree of risk in owning a gun. When you increase risk, you should also consider increasing coverage. When selecting a policy, don't cheap out.

There can also be cases of potential liability where you would be exposed if you simply contributed in some fashion to the shooting. If your gun is stolen because your house was unlocked and later used in a shooting, you may face at least partial liability, even though you were the victim of theft. "If you're going to own a gun, think of it as your pet tiger. If it bites someone, you can be responsible," Squires says. Don't shoot the messenger — we're not saying it's right, but it's the reality.





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Policy language, and sometimes statutes, typically eliminates any coverage on what they refer to as “intentional” or “willful” acts. But what are intentional acts? These also tend to be defined by the insurance provider. Insurance companies assess risk for a living and won’t put themselves in positions to cover acts that could have been avoided. An accident is not an intentional act, but negligence on the part of the insured can be subject to many variables.

### USE OF FORCE

In the event of self-defense, you’re probably asking yourself if any potential liability would be covered. It depends. While having to fire on an intruder because you felt your life was in imminent danger is deliberate, it was not premeditated. Some fictitious situations to put this in context are as follows:

**Situation One:** You’re home alone at 2 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon. You hear a window break and see someone entering your home. You grab your gun and confront the intruder whom you recognize as the 14-year-old neighborhood drug addict. He appears to be unarmed and in the process of leaving your home with your computer under his arm. You fire on this intruder, claiming that you were in fear for your life, severely injuring him.

**Situation Two:** You are at home alone at 2 a.m. on a Saturday morning. You hear a window break and see someone entering your home. You immediately call the police and give them your name, address, an assessment of the situation, and tell them you’re in fear for your life. You stay on the phone and hide in the corner of your room with a loaded firearm. You hear steps coming toward you. The intruder, whom you don’t recognize, enters the room you’re hiding in. You tell him that you have a loaded gun and if he approaches you that you’ll fire. As he continues toward you, disregarding your warning, you fire and severely injure him.

If the teenager’s mother or intruder number two sue you in civil court and you have insurance that specifically covers acts of self-defense using a firearm,



you may not be out of the woods yet. Your insurer might refuse to pay your legal expenses or, even if it does pay your legal defenses, refuse to pay a judgment that might be entered against you. If you take your insurer to court, you’ll have to convince a jury that your fear was genuine — and if you’ve already lost the case against you, that may be difficult.

While many other factors will impact the verdict, including state laws, in Situation One you may have lower odds not only of winning the mother’s lawsuit against you, but also of winning your suit against the insurer. Why? For one thing, you didn’t immediately alert authorities. We live in a society where many folks consider it the responsibility of the police to do the dirty work. Also, you didn’t avoid the situation. Why would you confront a situation you claimed to be in fear of? Lastly, the intruder appeared to be and was ultimately unarmed, and leaving your property, not presenting a

lethal threat. “It’s your responsibility to know what’s legal and what’s not legal in self-defense. All the same issues crop up when you intentionally use force in your home. Whether you act with a baseball bat or a knife or you unleash your dog to attack the intruder, the same laws apply,” says Wahlquist. Again, we’re simply presenting the reality that you’ll face here, not weighing in on what law abiding citizens ought to be expected to do in these situations.

Be smart, practice home-invasion drills (see “Safe House” in RECOIL Issue 8), avoid an armed confrontation if possible, and call the authorities. The more you do to demonstrate you handled the situation in a level-headed manner, the better your chances if the situation goes to court. And if it does go to court, having the right insurance will better your odds even more. You can’t defend your family and property from a prison cell. **R**



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# THE GRAY AREA

## A DEFENSE ATTORNEY EXAMINES AND COMPARES POLICIES BY JASON SQUIRES

**Shooting insurance?** There are several types of insurance available on the market. For example, there's life, health, auto, and homeowners — even insurance on ATVs and motorcycles. But is there an insurance policy in the event that you use a firearm defending yourself? The answer: Yes.

So, to simplify this concept there are three types of insurance:

- » **Theft:** You've been robbed. How much theft coverage do you have for the stolen items?
- » **Personal Liability:** e.g. Negligence related to a firearm, usually at your home.
- » **Self-Defense:** Legal fees to avoid or defend against criminal prosecution following a self-defense encounter.

The NRA offers Personal Firearms Liability Insurance. For about \$200 a year, a person

can purchase a policy directly from the NRA that adds \$1 million of coverage to any liability policy. This policy is tailor made for shooters, collectors, and hunters. Let's review what's generally covered for the average person and what a responsible person can do to supplement their standard coverage.

The NRA also offers Self-Defense Insurance, in case you're charged with an alleged crime involving a firearm and self-defense. The coverage reimburses for cost of criminal defense representation. This means you pay first and then submit a claim to be reimbursed for the cost of your lawyer following criminal charges — so keep in mind that you'll be out-of-pocket until then.

State Farm, Farmers, Allstate, and any insurance carrier that offers homeowners

insurance will typically have a personal liability coverage associated with the policy. This portion of the policy, usually up to \$100,000, covers the insured from a broad range of issues where someone might try and sue. This liability coverage is usually associated with the home, such as if your tree falls over the fence and crushes the neighbor's car, the neighbor's kid falls out of the tree house in the backyard, etc. All of these examples have the home as the "scene." But, homeowner policies can also cover dog bites and some firearms issues.

### WHAT'S THE INTENT?

Some homeowner policies do not cover "intentional" acts. If you pull the trigger while defending yourself, is that "intentional?"



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## THE GRAY AREA

Now, we're starting to get into the gray area — the real reason we need insurance in this complicated society. To keep the concept simple, "intentional" usually means premeditated, but the law and exclusions vary from state to state. An example from one of my cases: wife shoots and kills husband, then husband's family sues to collect from the insurance carrier. The insurance company responded, "No, we're not paying because the act was intentional." This might appear a remote possibility; however, these lawsuits are becoming routine, almost standard. In this example, the husband had minor children from a previous marriage that were orphaned. The husband's elderly mother was trying to collect any money possible to assist with raising the children. These lawsuits are common and protecting yourself is prudent — consider purchasing insurance policies designed to protect you from "evil" lawsuits.

But watch out — some policies exclude any coverage related to any use of a firearm. The homeowner might receive coverage in the event a firearms collection is stolen (usually a very small amount, around \$5,000 total for all firearms). But, some insurance companies will deny any claim related to the misuse of a firearm. It's important to check with your insurance carrier to determine your policy coverage.

Want to protect yourself? Let's stop and reflect. We're all busy. We all have better things to do with our time than get out the magnifying glass and read the fine print of our insurance policies.

Still, set aside one afternoon this coming month to make a call to your insurance carrier and find out precisely the extent of your firearms coverage. If you appear annoying, say your naggy lawyer made you call.

### COVERAGE

Back on point: what sort of coverage should you seek? First, investigate a personal liability umbrella policy ("PLUP"). Most PLUPs add \$1 million in coverage to all policies. For instance, a \$100,000 per person/\$300,000 per occurrence liability coverage would add \$1 million in insurance coverage to your car, house, boat, R.V., etc. The pricing of this sort of policy is usually around \$350 to \$1,000 per year, or \$30 to \$100 a month.

Even after obtaining a PLUP, you might want greater coverage. "Want" might not be the most precise word choice, since no one likes insurance. The idea behind insurance is that the policy holder is paying ongoing fees in return for coverage if and when a tragedy strikes, while the insurance carrier hopes to never have to pay you a dime.

There are some exciting new trends in the form of insurance designed exclusively for the firearms enthusiast in mind. Companies like the Armed Citizens Defense Network offer a policy that will pay your attorney in the event you are charged with a crime following a self-defense encounter. While your insurance company is trying to decide if it has any exposure following a shooting, the Armed Citizen's

Defense Network will actively try to get you a lawyer and get you released from jail. This is similar to the NRA Self-Defense Insurance policy, except the Armed Citizen's Defense Network will immediately send you money for your attorney, rather than requiring you to seek reimbursement.

To compare the two policies: With the NRA policy, you pay attorney fees out of pocket, then later request reimbursement for your legal expenses. With the Armed Citizen's Defense Network, you're provided with \$10,000 almost immediately to run out and hire your own lawyer. The key difference is obviously the need to come up with large sums of money following a disaster where you were charged with a crime.

The NRA Self-Defense Insurance has policies that begin at \$165 annually for \$100,000 in coverage. The policy tops out at \$1,000,000 for \$600 annually. This is competitive with the Armed Citizen's Defense Network.

In conclusion, we discussed three types of insurance: theft, liability, and self-defense.

The NRA offers the broadest spectrum of coverage, including personal Firearms Liability Insurance and/or Self-Defense Insurance. Providers like the Armed Citizen's Defense Network accord added coverage to begin almost immediately following a self-defense encounter where the police suspect the defender of committing a crime.

I urge you to make sure you have adequate coverage in all three areas.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jason Squires is an attorney in Arizona with over 15 years of defense experience. In his off-time he competes across the nation in three-gun competitions. In full disclosure, Jason Squires has purchased several of the insurance policies listed above.



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# TRAINING ONLINE

CAN YOU ATTAIN A SEAL'S  
MINDSET THROUGH A WEBCAM?  
WE REVIEW A SEALED  
MINDSET CLASS TO FIND OUT.

BY DAVID REEDER  
PHOTOS BY MIKE MANUEL

This will sound counterintuitive when you first hear it, and rightfully so — online webcam firearm training. That sounds about as far-fetched as trying to learn about shooting by watching a DVD or YouTube video.

Oh, wait a minute...

Sealed Mindset is a self-defense training facility based in New Hope, Minnesota. It was founded by Larry Yatch, a Naval Academy graduate who served as a lieutenant on SEAL Team 3. As you might surmise, the name of

his company is derived from his time in Naval Special Warfare.

"We know it's the mindset that makes for a truly effective SEAL," Yatch says. "What we've done at Sealed Mindset is make getting that mindset accessible to everyone."

That sounds well and good, if perhaps something of a trope. For those who can't attend its facility in person, Sealed Mindset offers online training. While one-on-one communication and virtual instruction via Skype and an online webcam training platform (Pow-How.com) is a step up from watching a video without any interaction, there's still a pretty obvious gap. No amount of discussion and demonstration can adequately compensate for practical live-fire application in an instructor's presence on the range. To help bridge that gap Sealed Mindset advocates the use of the SIRT training pistol from Next Level Training. Designed to feel



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like a Glock 17, the SIRT pistol generates a red laser with a small amount of pressure applied to the trigger and then a green laser when the trigger is fully pressed. It's probably one of the greatest training tools currently available.

Essentially, you'll attend online video conferences in which you're coached through a dry-fire session or taught about situational awareness and mindset.

## HARDWARE ISSUES

These online courses are a great concept with tremendous potential — but there are a few problems that present themselves. First is that a student is bound by his or her hardware and Internet service.

Who amongst us has not suffered through lagging, buffering, and other connection issues simply trying to watch a short YouTube video? The Sealed Mindset online sessions were

Below: Despite an innovative way to teach firearms, the Sealed Mindset online classes might scare off some potential students due to its click-bait style marketing.

no exception. During our online training there were many awkward moments when student talked over instructor or vice versa — and the connection was completely severed at one point. While

these sort of issues are contingent upon Internet connections, they can be distracting and are certainly something that must be kept in mind — but not a deal-breaker.

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Another drawback is audio quality. Because of standoff between the webcam's microphone in the classroom and the instructor (ours was Kurt Brouillet, a retired Marine officer and Iraq combat veteran) there were times when this impeded communication, but again not so much as to put us off from trying it again.

### TACTICAL DOJO

The curriculum is divided into one-hour blocks of personalized instruction with approximately 20 minutes spent on each topic, such as drawstroke, grip, stance, and other fundamentals. Lessons cover the effects of stress, the need to see three things (front sight, rear sight, and environment), and cautionary notes about chasing the laser and being a "whack-a-mole" shooter. It's presented more like a martial art than a college class, though there are similarities.

Interestingly, Brouillet began teaching the draw-stroke starting from full extension back into the holster and, like the late Paul Gomez, teaches gripping the pistol with a flagged thumb. He's obviously a proficient shooter, and we enjoyed the instruction despite the occasional "interwebz" discombobulation. We certainly found no fault with the material or its delivery.

Brouillet advised us that Sealed Mindset classes are offered in five levels for handgun, with parallel levels for rifle,

SIRT (Shot Indicating Resetting Trigger) training guns are currently only available in a Glock model, but the M&P version is in the works with a hopeful release this year. Developed about five years ago by Mike Hughes' Next Level Training, the SIRT guns are each equipped with two lasers. One (red) will engage with slight pressure to the trigger. The other (green) does so with a trigger press, allowing you to see where your shot would have gone versus where you were aiming. These two colors allow for great contrast and provide immediate feedback. This allows even a relatively

inexperienced shooter to quickly perform self-correction, assuming the SIRT gun was set up correctly and the shooter already has a grasp of the fundamentals. You can also shut off the red trigger take-up laser to focus on just the green shot indication laser.

The \$240 price tag might sound like a lot to spend on a training tool (\$140 for a drop-in AR bolt replacement), but once you factor in the ability to train virtually anywhere and the ammunition savings, you might find it a damn good investment.

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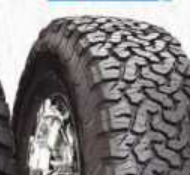
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though the website currently only shows three:

- ▶ **Fundamentals:** Begins with a session entitled “Never Unarmed” and includes such topics as shooting fundamentals and loading/unloading.
- ▶ **Weapons Manipulation:** Comprised of the draw, multiple targets, transitions, and other topics.
- ▶ **Immediate Actions:** Includes reloads and malfunctions, then goes back to “Never Unarmed.”

There is a live-fire component — you just have to drive to Minnesota to partake.

## CONCLUSION

The largest gripe with Sealed Mindset has nothing to do with what its online course offers, but rather the promotional presentation on its websites (e.g. [www.concealedcarrymasterscourse.com](http://www.concealedcarrymasterscourse.com)) and, to a lesser extent, in the videos. Much of the wording on the site is unfortunately sensational and reads like click bait you might see at the bottom of a website. Although it might not be at all indicative of the true personalities at Sealed Mindset, the fact that



With nothing more than a webcam, 'net connection, laptop, and training pistol, you can get solid training in the comfort of your own home.

it sounds like Billy Mays helped with the script may turn some prospective students away. They're teaching survival techniques and gun-handling, not proper use of a spray paint polymer that makes a screen door in the bottom of a boat waterproof.

Is it worth the money? As always, that's an individual call. At \$39 per hour or \$99 for three hours, the pricing isn't bad. They offer one class to prospective students for free so there's

no reason not to give it a try.

We say give it a whirl if you don't have access to or the budget for formal in-person training in your area. It's convenient, doesn't require a range, provides a record of your training so you can go back and review, and gives you the chance to actually ask questions rather than just rewind over and over to parse something out. In any case, it's a better use of your money than LiveJasmin. ■



## ▶ SEALED MINDSET

Sealed Mindset is a 10,000-square-foot training facility near Minneapolis, Minnesota, that includes a heated indoor range, allowing 270 degrees of live fire. The staff conducts firearms training, tactical classes, combatives, contingency planning, leadership, fitness, and event-driven scenario-based courses (think hooded students forced to react when unmasked), concealed carry, offensive/defensive driving, and more.

Founder and CEO Larry Yatch's goal is to “leverage Navy SEAL lessons to help individuals overcome challenges” and to “impact society on as many levels as possible.” To that end, this former Navy Special Warfare operator and his cadre not only teach hundreds of classes onsite, they distribute DVDs, conduct webcam-based virtual instruction, and even teach leadership classes to local school children, focusing on the mental as much as the physical. They promote a holistic approach to training and preparedness.

▶ [www.sealedmindset.com](http://www.sealedmindset.com)





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# MR. SANDMAN



THOUGH APPARENTLY  
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BUBBLEGUM POP TUNE,  
DEAD AIR'S FLAGSHIP  
SUPPRESSOR DELIVERS  
A QUIETER MELODY

BY IAIN HARRISON  
PHOTOS BY KENDA LENSEIGNE

Mike Pappas was one of the founders of SilencerCo before moving on to set up Dead Air, so you could say he has provenance in the suppressor industry. The Sandman models you see here are the result of his years of experience, coupled with a healthy dose of R&D and a splash of customer input. The finished products take their place in a growing lineup of suppressors that seem to offer everything the market has demanded, and then some.

The longer of the two Sandman (Sandmen?) cans contains eight cone-type baffles and is hearing safe to .300 Winchester Magnum levels of pressure and powder volume. The five-baffle shorty is a bit lighter and handier, but you'll want to wear hearing protection when using it on the bigger calibers. Both feature 17-4 stainless tubes and



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The B.E. Meyers 249F Flash Hider was designed to meet the unique, high volume firepower and flash suppression needs of the SOF community to ensure superior survivability on the active battlefield. Despite more than a decade in service, it remains the best ranked flash suppressor on the market as tested by both SOCOM and to independent civilian testing.

With the large scale pivot from major combat operations into direct action raids, it was only natural that B.E. Meyers evolve their award winning patented technology to meet current needs. The B.E. Meyers 249SAKER flash suppressor was developed in conjunction with SilencerCo and is compatible with the 5.56/.223 MAAD mount system for Saker silencers.

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Dead Air

**MODEL:**  
Sandman

**CALIBER:**  
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Magnum

**OVERALL LENGTH:**  
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8.9 inches (L Model)

**WEIGHT:**  
17.3 ounces (S Model)  
21.8 ounces (L Model)

**MSRP:**  
\$1,050 (S Model)  
\$1,200 (L Model)

**URL:**  
[www.deadairsilencers.com/products.html](http://www.deadairsilencers.com/products.html)

end caps and are available as either direct-thread or quick-detach (QD) models. When we shot them on a Bushmaster ACR, we were impressed by the low tonal quality of the muzzle blast, which was among the most pleasant we've encountered.

Instead of utilizing an Inconel blast baffle and then less expensive, easier-to-machine stainless components further down the baffle stack, Dead Air uses Stellite, an extremely erosion-resistant and costly alloy that is typically cast and then ground, rather than machined, due to its toughness.

When used in conjunction with its dedicated muzzle brake, which absorbs the initial jet of superheated gas, there's very little chance that a Sandman will die by erosion. "You couldn't afford the ammo to wear it out, and if you did, you'd have better things to do with your time," Pappas said. Challenge accepted — time to build that 7.5-inch barreled NEMO .300 Win Mag we've always wanted.

"What about baffle strikes?" we hear you cry. Well, the most likely part of the suppressor to be hit by an errant

bullet is the end cap, as yaw and lateral errors are magnified by distance from the muzzle. In this case, the end cap is user-replaceable, which is a bonus for those of us who drop expensive stuff on a regular basis.

A word on the Dead Air brake, an example of which ships with every QD suppressor. Apart from acting as the interface between barrel and can, it does a pretty decent job of recoil reduction on its own, without being completely obnoxious. When shot side by side with the Lancer Nitrous compensator on our 14.5-inch barreled three-gun carbine, its reduced concussion was readily apparent. By tapping off a portion of the gasses entering its first expansion chamber and directing them forward, the sideways blast exiting the next three chambers is disrupted, reducing impact on the shooter.

To utilize the QD feature, the can is aligned to the 12 o'clock position and slipped onto the brake — there's only one way it can go on, so point of aim shift is both minimized and, just as importantly, consistent. The shooter then twists the suppressor body to lock the three primary and secondary lugs onto the brake, whereupon the locking ring

stops and the tube continues ratcheting for another half turn or so. At this point, the beveled mating surfaces on both can and brake meet to form a self-aligning, gas-tight seal, which keeps carbon away from anything important and allows the user to easily dismount the can, even after many hundreds of rounds. Sounds peachy, right?

We thought so, too. Then we launched a can downrange from the muzzle of a .300 Win Mag. Looks of consternation went around the group, as up till now everything in the field evaluation was going great; from mag dumps on a .223 to ringing steel at 60 yards with a suppressed .22 pistol. Looking at the suppressor, it became apparent that the QD mount had sheared its locking lugs and everyone stroked their chins and offered opinions as to what might have caused the problem. "Not sure what's wrong with it," offered Pappas. "But we're going to test the shit out of it until we find out."

True to his word, he called a week later after discovering that the batch of locking rings arriving the day before our test were compromised by faulty heat treatment. Instead of the RC 40 value originally spec'd, these tested at a butter-soft RC 20 which, while good enough for .223 and .308, failed to withstand the mighty Win Mag. One plane ticket and a case full of ammo later, we were satisfied the problem had been rectified and can now unreservedly recommend the Sandman on calibers up to its rated limit. **R**







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# PRACTICAL FITNESS

## PARTICIPATION RIBBONS WILL NOT BE AWARDED...

BY BUCK DOYLE

PHOTOS BY KYLA DOYLE AND STRAIGHT 8

"Never confuse effort with results" has long been a personal and professional motto of mine. In today's world of participation trophies and the obligatory "nice try," there seems to be an emphasis on rewarding process over product.

### EFFORT VERSUS RESULTS

During my years as a Reconnaissance Marine I can't tell you the number of times I had team leaders rattle off all the hard work they and their team had put in — only to explain that they failed to accomplish their assigned mission. They learned quickly (and loudly) that the next time they better spare me the labor pains and show me the baby. The fact is results matter.

If you're going to put in the time and effort to train, work, practice, whatever, everything you do ought to be designed to achieve your objective. If not, you need to change what you're doing.

When I ask my clients how they intend to employ their firearm — whether they're a Recon Marine, a law enforcement officer, an avid hunter, or a single mom looking to protect her family — none have claimed their objective was shooting tin cans off of a fence or punching holes in a paper target. Despite that, many of them train for little else. A boxer, a speed skater, and a gymnast all train differently because they need their bodies to perform very different tasks under very different circumstances. In the same light, shooters need to adjust their physical fitness regimen and range training in order to perform off the flat range, and in real-world circumstances.

### WARNING!

The exercises and content expressed in this column are for illustrative purposes only. Consult your physician before trying any physical activity or nutritional plan. RECOIL and its contributors are not responsible for any harm or injuries sustained while attempting these techniques.



# The Operator Band

How Will You Survive?



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**RE** | **FACT**  **R**  
TACTICAL



My job and lifestyle have made function a priority over cosmetics when it comes to workouts. In my active duty days, I needed to be strong enough to lift heavy gear or a man down, flexible enough to shoot from awkward positions, or have the stamina to hike long distances one moment and sprint to cover the next. Functional exercises that integrate multiple muscle groups not only improve strength and balance, but reduce injury by mimicking movements we're more likely to use every day.

### WALK AND CHEW GUM

Shooting requires us to employ the seven fundamentals correctly — and all at the same time. Grip, stance, sight alignment, sight picture, trigger control, breathing, and follow through — now add movement or uneven terrain to the mix and many of these go out the window. Likewise, it's important to train ourselves to use more than one major muscle group at a time — to walk and chew gum so to speak. That way we're training our body and our brain to perform tasks together, not just in isolation.

These fundamentals are often something we do subconsciously — we don't really think about them as we shoot, we just do it. I like to train "consciously," being specifically aware of my grip or my trigger control on the range or of my body position and technique in the gym. Better to do fewer squat presses correctly, than more reps at the expense of correct form. Instead of adding more reps or shooting faster, I'll perform the same skill with an elevated heart rate or wearing heavier gear — all while consciously maintaining my form and technique. By maintaining a conscious standard throughout the workouts, even when muscles get fatigued, this trains the subconscious to kick in when it matters — and perform at the same high

### INCLINE TREADMILL WITH DUMBBELL INTERVALS

Incline training will not only get your heart rate up, it also provides significant muscle development in the legs (especially at inclines over 15 percent). Adding light weights and simultaneous upper body movements cranks up the cardio benefits while providing full body resistance training.

- » Warm up briskly by walking on a treadmill (three to five minutes), gradually increasing to a 15-percent incline.
- » Set speed to 3 mph with incline at 30 percent.
- » Using light dumbbells that have been placed on or near the treadmill, perform alternating forward punching movements, keeping arms level with the shoulders and movements controlled, while continuing to walk on the incline treadmill.
- » Continue walking and dumbbell movements for 100 vertical feet.



### DUMBBELL SQUAT PRESS

One of the best exercises you can do, the squat, gets even better when you add a shoulder press — a combo move that will not only build both upper and lower body strength, but will get your heart pumping for extra cardiovascular benefit.

- » Hold a pair of dumbbells at your shoulders, standing with your feet hip-width apart.
- » Push your hips back and lower into a squat, keeping your chest upright and your knees over your toes.
- » As you push through your heels to return to standing, press the dumbbells overhead. Lower the weights to return to the starting position.



standard even under greater physical stress.

### ELEVATE YOUR TRAINING

I remember distinctly being told early in my military career that an elevated heart rate significantly decreases a shooter's accuracy. My first thought was, *That's crap*. I couldn't imagine a real-life situation when I'd have to shoot someone where my heart rate wouldn't be elevated, whether the result of physical or psychological stress (or both).

So it seemed like an excuse to accept a lower standard of accuracy at times when accuracy really mattered.

Much has been written about physical-versus-psychological stress, its relation to heart rate, and effects on the shooter. But simply speaking, if you're oxygen-depleted after a 40-yard sprint to cover, your ability to maintain a good stance, controlled breathing, or even steady sight alignment is going to be affected. However, if you've consistently trained those marksmanship



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skills at an elevated heart rate, you're going to largely mitigate the negative effects on your performance.

For a shooter to perform accurately under physical duress, it requires aerobic and anaerobic conditioning, as well as performing conscious/correct repetitions of the fundamentals with an elevated heart rate. My students are often surprised by how much of my courses — even at the beginner level — are done on the move or with an elevated heart rate. I believe firmly that

there are no “advanced” shooting skills, only more advanced applications of the same set of fundamentals. In shooting, results matter, and practical application needs to be taught at all levels.

### OFF RANGE

Here are a couple of examples of what I do both on and off the range to improve and maintain my shooting performance under physical stress.

High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) is an effective and time-efficient way to

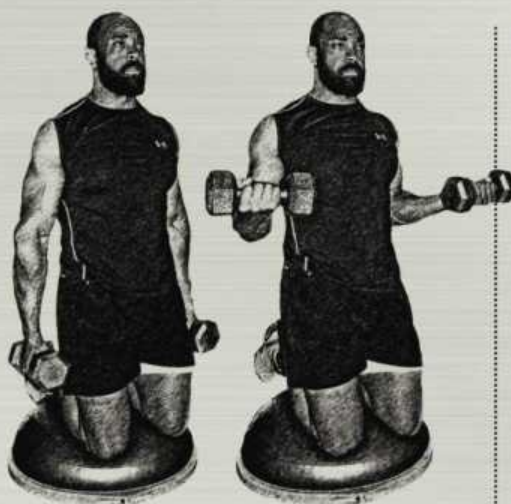
incorporate both aerobic and anaerobic exercise with functional strength training movements, while improving post-exertion recovery time. This forces the shooter to perform specific movements consciously in order to preserve correct form and technique, even at a consistently elevated heart rate.

Each exercise should be done at near maximum capacity for a set time interval (30 seconds to three minutes) with a brief rest period after every two-exercise periods. Repeat the circuit three times.

### » BOSU BALL CURLS

Adding the instability of the BOSU ball to a simple strength exercise improves overall balance and activates all the muscles of the core. In addition, when muscles begin to fatigue, the tendency to compensate using momentum, or swing to lift weights is countered by the need to maintain balance throughout the motion.

- » Kneel on soft side of BOSU, keeping toes *off* the ground behind you throughout the circuit.
- » Perform full extension curls, both arms at a time.



### » JUMPING LUNGES

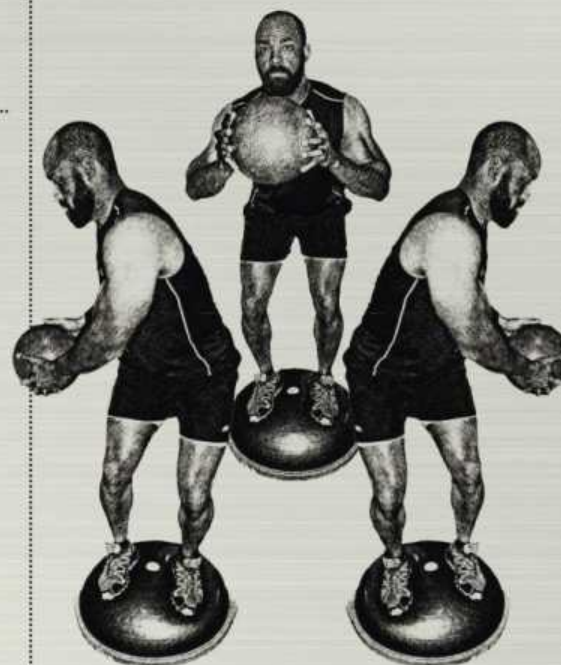
The jumping lunge is a plyometric exercise that's hard to beat when it comes to combining increases in cardiovascular fitness, balance, strength, and stamina all in one exercise. Get the most out of this exercise by being conscious of your body position throughout the interval, and putting full effort and air time into the jump movement.

- » Begin with normal lunge with front leg at a 90-degree angle in the squat position and back leg behind you.
- » Squat body explosively up into a jump.
- » Switch your feet in the air, moving back leg in front and front leg in back.
- » Go straight into a lunge with opposite legs.
- » Keep chest and torso upright throughout the entire movement.



### » MEDICINE BALL TOSS

Now that you're feeling fatigued on both a cardiovascular and muscular level, finish up the circuit with an exercise that will require full body muscle engagement, balance, and hand-eye coordination. Shooters will gain both gross and fine motor benefits, and train hand-eye movements in conjunction with full body strength and muscle endurance. (Trust me, by round three you'll be using conscious effort to catch and throw while maintaining balance.)



- » Gain your balance standing on the BOSU ball.
- » Have a partner toss the ball to each side of your body. Catch and control the ball.
- » Follow this with an explosive throw from chest level back to your partner.





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## ON RANGE

POINT-OF-DOMINATION  
RIFLE DRILLS

A point of domination (POD) is a specific point where a shooter can optimally engage targets in a tactical environment. A POD should provide a shooter with cover and concealment. The purpose of the POD drill is to train the shooter to identify, move to, and engage targets from a point that provides cover and concealment — all while under physical duress.

When using a 100-meter flat range, I like to stagger multiple barricades in between the 25- and 100-meter

line, with steel targets placed at the 1-meter line. I use three steel targets from MGM Targets for this drill: two IPSC targets and one 12-inch-long range target.

The shooter begins at the 100-meter line, engaging the 12-inch target with two shots, moving to his next POD (barricade) and engaging both IPSCs with two shots. The shooter continues to his next POD performing the same method of engagement, until he reaches the last POD at the 25-meter line. The shooter then sprints back to the 100-meter line and reengages the 12-inch target

from the prone position with five shots.

At each barricade, and after each sprint to the PODs, the shooter should take note of the elevation in heart rate and apply conscious effort to marksmanship fundamentals (grip, stance, sight alignment, sight picture, trigger control, breathing, and follow through). The objective is to sustain performance and accuracy even as heart rate elevates. Correct execution and accuracy should be the primary focus, with time and speed improvements coming secondarily as conditioning and accuracy increase. ■



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Buck Doyle is the owner and founder of Follow Through Consulting, LLC, which provides tactical firearms instruction as well as consulting, advising, and speaking to military, law enforcement, and civilians. Buck served over 21 years in the U.S. Marine Corps, including 17 years and multiple combat tours with special operations units (1st Force Recon, 1st Recon Battalion, and MARSOC). Buck is one of nine U.S. service members highlighted in Mark Greenblatt's book, *Valor: Unsung Heroes of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Home Front*, and is featured in the upcoming season of the Outdoor Channel's series, *Fight to Survive*. Buck and his wife Kyla live, work, hike, and raise their two daughters in the beautiful Cache Valley area of Utah.





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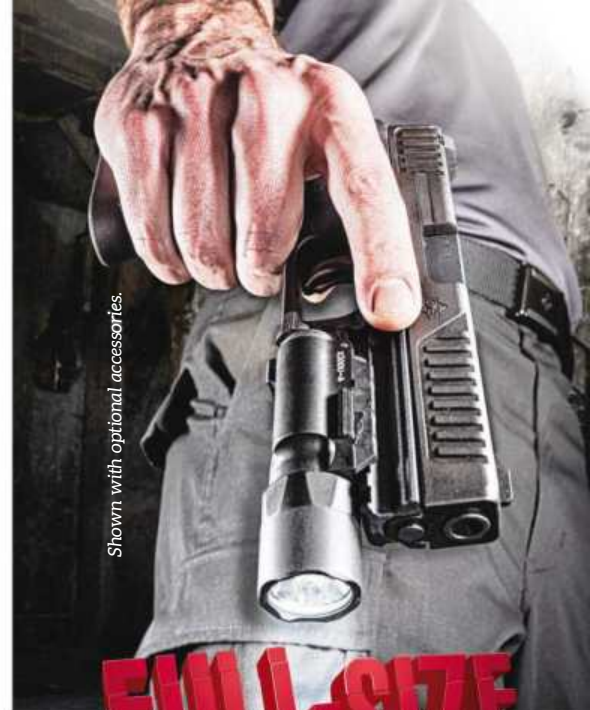
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**NEW COLUMN!**

Welcome to the debut of *Mindset*, a column that focuses on not only understanding, but enhancing our No. 1 weapon: our minds.

# REACTION TIME

## THE PSYCHOLOGY AND PHYSIOLOGY OF GUNFIGHTING

BY DR. NEAL H. OLSHAN

Reaction time has been misunderstood for centuries. The phrase describes a process that is actually two distinct parts of the reaction paradigm. “React” always comes first and is both conscious and unconscious in its nature. To react involves the processing of information.

## REACTION

The “action” part of the paradigm is your response to the information collected and processed by your brain. Action is based upon information received from the react segment of the paradigm, past experiences, training, and the current environment.

This is the amount of time it takes for the body to begin the physical process of either fight or flight.

This column will focus upon the react segment of the reaction paradigm. Why? Because not only is it one of my favorite topics, it's also been misunderstood since the after-action report on the stabbing of Julius Caesar in 44 B.C. — the Roman historian Suetonius commented, “If only his reactions had been quicker.” Of course, he wrote that 150 years after the emperor's assassination, but the biographer might have been onto something. He described how Caesar ignored various premonitions despite mentioning to friends several minutes

prior to the actual attack about something being wrong. Although we'll never know for sure, it appears likely that Caesar's brain had sorted through hundreds of bits of information and was sending a warning signal that he ignored.

Many of you may already be muttering, “That's very interesting, Doc, but not much help if I'm walking to my car in a darkened parking lot with my significant other when three men with very unfriendly looks are walking toward us.” To wit I respond, “This column is not about who has the fastest draw or can put the most rounds downrange in the least amount of time.”



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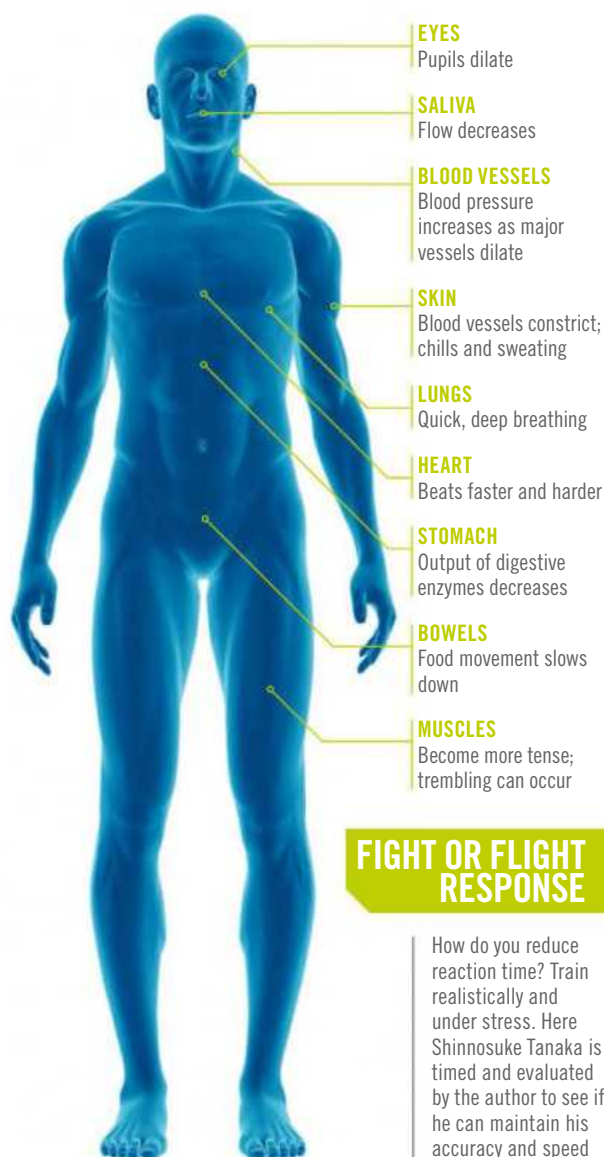
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## FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE

How do you reduce reaction time? Train realistically and under stress. Here Shinnosuke Tanaka is timed and evaluated by the author to see if he can maintain his accuracy and speed after running a series of challenging drills.



## FIGHT OR FLIGHT

When confronted with a threat (real or imagined), our entire sympathetic nervous system is activated, producing a “fight or flight” response. It’s a survival mechanism that prepares all animals to run or fight for their lives. The response could cause indigestion, rapid breathing, and heart pounding. Why? The fear-related stress hormone epinephrine (commonly called adrenalin) causes physical, cognitive, behavioral, performance, and heart rate changes. But it also brings about a general increase in physical energy and strength. After the danger passes,

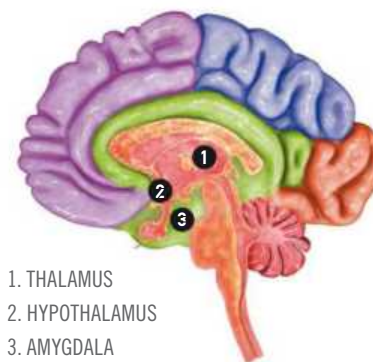
norepinephrine returns the body to a balance, but because the body has had such a profound change in response to the adrenalin, a backlash often follows.

When triggered by a spontaneous or unexpected attack, the brain will take control of the body with an immediate “protective reflex” (downloaded directly to the brain stem where all are reflexive responses to danger are stored).

The process of reacting is faster than the world’s most advanced computer. Researchers in Japan used a K computer (currently the fourth most powerful in the world) to simulate human brain activity. The computer has 705,024 processor cores and 1.4 million gigabytes of RAM, but still took 40 minutes to crunch the data for just one second of brain activity. Statements such as “Just give me a minute to think,” sabotage the reaction paradigm. Thinking is one of the slowest functions that the human brain performs. Thinking for the human brain is like

going 160 mph in a Ferrari Enzo and suddenly downshifting to second gear.

Reacting is the decision-making process that starts with your senses. You hear a noise in your living room, awakening you in the middle of the night, or you see a man with a gun in your front yard. While these events are happening, certain parts of your brain are shifting into high gear. The major parts of the brain in the react process are the thalamus, hypothalamus, and amygdala.



1. THALAMUS
2. HYPOTHALAMUS
3. AMYGDALA

▶ **Thalamus:** It’s located at the top of the brain stem in approximately the center of the brain. It acts as a switchboard and is responsible for deciding where to send the sensory information collected by the sensory organs, with the exception of the olfactory system (smell). The thalamus is responsible for relaying sensory data, processing sensory data, regulating arousal, initiating activity, and controlling the level of awareness.

▶ **Hypothalamus:** It links the nervous system with the endocrine system and is located just below the thalamus atop the brainstem. It’s the part that determines the need for the fight or flight response and is the final stage in determining the type of response.

▶ **Amygdala:** It’s responsible for decoding and storing emotional memories. It’ll search your memory to determine if there’s a past experience with a similar threat stimulus. If a memory is found, then this past experience will shape how you’ll respond at the current time.



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The result of reacting a fraction of a second too slow: the author's bicep after he was shot with a UTM round during force-on-force training.

## SENSE AND EXPERIENCE

As kids, we were taught the five senses: sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing. However, most researchers say that there are at least nine human senses — and some posit that there may be as many as 21. In the total sum of genetics, human beings seem to have been given the short end of the stick when it comes to perception.

Way back when our ancestors were hefting a large spear and sporting the latest in *Smilodon* loin cloths, tapping into every available sense meant the difference between getting a meal for everyone back in the cave or being a meal for a faster, more powerful creature. Most researchers believe that over time we've lost the ability to use information from many subtle and seldom-used senses, which had been essential for survival in the past. Some people call it intuition — others second sight or that sensation that makes the hair on the back of your neck tingle. Whatever you label it, my advice is always, "Listen to what your mind is telling you. It's important."

Whenever the brain begins to sense a possible threat, it immediately searches your experiential database for

similar events or situations in the past. The amygdala, the area of the brain that contributes to emotional processing, then sends a distress signal to the hypothalamus. This area of the brain functions like a command center, communicating with the rest of the body through the nervous system so that the person has the physical ability to fight or flee.

When your brain uses the react system, some or all of the following can play a significant role in the instructions given to the action system:

### ▶ **Reticular Activating System (RAS):**

This automatic mechanism alerts you to relevant information. It's influenced by your belief system. You can program the RAS to get amplified information that helps to achieve any goal. The part of the reticular formation in the brainstem plays a central role in bodily and behavioral alertness.

▶ **Preconscious Processing:** Our brains instantly analyze a few key features of any situation before we are consciously aware of them, to enable instant reactions.

▶ **Mental Rehearsal:** This is creatively visualizing the future and relearning

the behaviors necessary to bring the future to life. Competitive shooters often run through a course in their minds multiple times before they ever step up to compete.

▶ **Mirror Neurons:** Brain cells that fire not only when you perform an action, but when you observe another person performing an action. These neurons validate the premise that watching skilled firearms instructors can be a definite aid in your own visualizations and development.

▶ **Galatea Effect:** A type of self-fulfilling prophecy based on inner belief of self-worth, abilities, and potential. Therefore, when you train, avoid telling yourself any of the following: "I'm not as good as the people who went before me," or "If I don't do well, there's always tomorrow."

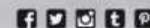
▶ **Placebo Effect:** Another type of self-fulfilling prophecy based on expectation of an outcome creating the outcome. Placebo effect can either have positive or negative consequences; that's why it's always important to believe that what you're learning will have a positive effect on your ability to defend yourself and your loved ones.





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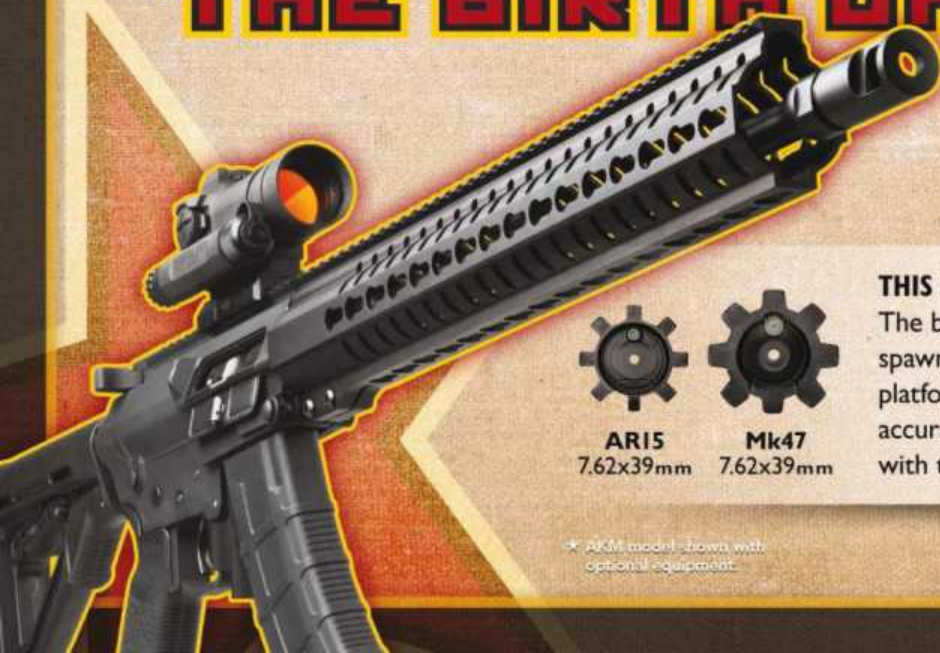
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## TRAIN FOR SUCCESS

The most effective method to modify the react process is through training. Reality-based training is essential for the development of neural pathways that lead to positive conclusions. The more memories that can be developed with a positive (successful) response to a given stressful stimulus, the more likely the chance for future survival. However, there are some common factors that can contaminate the react process and lead to mistakes in the action progress:

- › Poor sleep
- › Poor diet
- › Alcohol or drugs
- › Inconsistent training
- › Lack of reality-based training
- › Lack of visualization practice
- › Lack of situational-awareness habits

Fortunately, there are some ways to build neural pathways that can reinforce positive outcomes and future success:

- › Reality-based training
- › Practice utilizing visualization skills
- › Developing confidence in your perception and intuition
- › Developing confidence in your skills
- › Train for success

Unfortunately, the react segment of the reaction paradigm can inadvertently replicate a prior behavior even though it may have failed before. Therefore, repetitive training is one way to help establish new neural pathways (actions). Along with basic skills training, reality-based training takes you into situations where you begin to use the react-action paradigm. Ideally, when your brain searches for a similar circumstances or situations, you want it to bring forth those actions that were successful.

## WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

There is no magical incantation. No course taught by training superheroes. The best way to improve your reaction



time is to train — often and realistically. You have to dismiss the concept that going to a flat range and putting 140 rounds downrange once in a blue moon will automatically make you better prepared for a life-and-death situation. Probably the best and most effective method for training the react portion of the reaction paradigm (sympathetic nervous system) is to burn in neural pathways of success. This takes time and commitment to repeat each skill perfectly, with each repetition reinforcing the one before.

It's the personal responsibility of each individual to decide what level of training would be most productive based upon his or her job, lifestyle, and working/living environment.

Take some time to speak with a

reputable senior instructor and inquire about the different types of classes he or she might offer. Whether that training involves airsoft, electronic simulation ranges, close-quarter battle, or force-on-force, you must practice for success — and practice until you achieve that success. Each individual has to decide, based on whether they are military, law enforcement, first responder, or concerned citizen, what type of reality-based training would suit their particular needs, and what kind of proficiency level is realistic, given time constraints. After all, if a battle-hardened emperor could dismiss telltale signs of an impending knife ambush, it's not a stretch to think that we might become complacent in the bubble of our everyday lives. ■

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Neal H. Olshan is a freelance writer and photographer, as well as the chief combat psychologist for LMS Defense. He developed the Evolution of Mindset Training Program. Olshan is the author of six non-fiction books and wrote the novel *The Panama Escape* with his wife, Mary.

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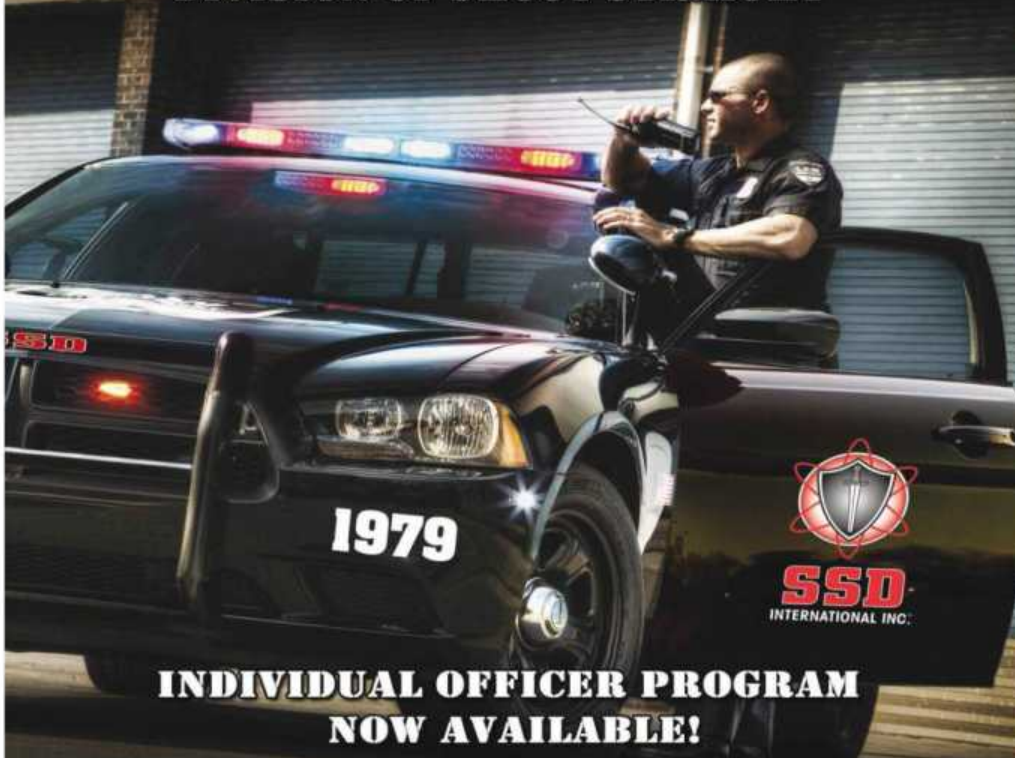


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# WANT “MOAR” PICS?

► BY DAVID REEDER

Coming up soon on RECOILweb.com — more “aftershoots” from various schools, events, and assorted kewl assignments we’ve gone on. Sometimes there are badass photographs and videos we’d like to share, but don’t have room in print — why not show ’em off in an online gallery?

Of particular interest to those of you who ever drive, ride, hitchhike, or walk around vehicles, we’ll be continuing to post material from a recent VCQB class taught by Will Petty up at 88 Tactical. Thanks to Firelance Media, we’ll have some exclusive video footage showing some of the most important (and startling) takeaways, and we’ll also be talking to some other instructors to garner additional insight on fighting in and around vehicles. Petty was a great instructor, but we’re all about learning from multiple sources — that’s the best way to avoid becoming “tactically inbred.”

You’re gonna be surprised to see some of what we’ve seen, promise. If we hadn’t been there to watch it, we’d have been tempted to dismiss it as bullshit ourselves. **R**



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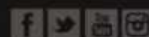
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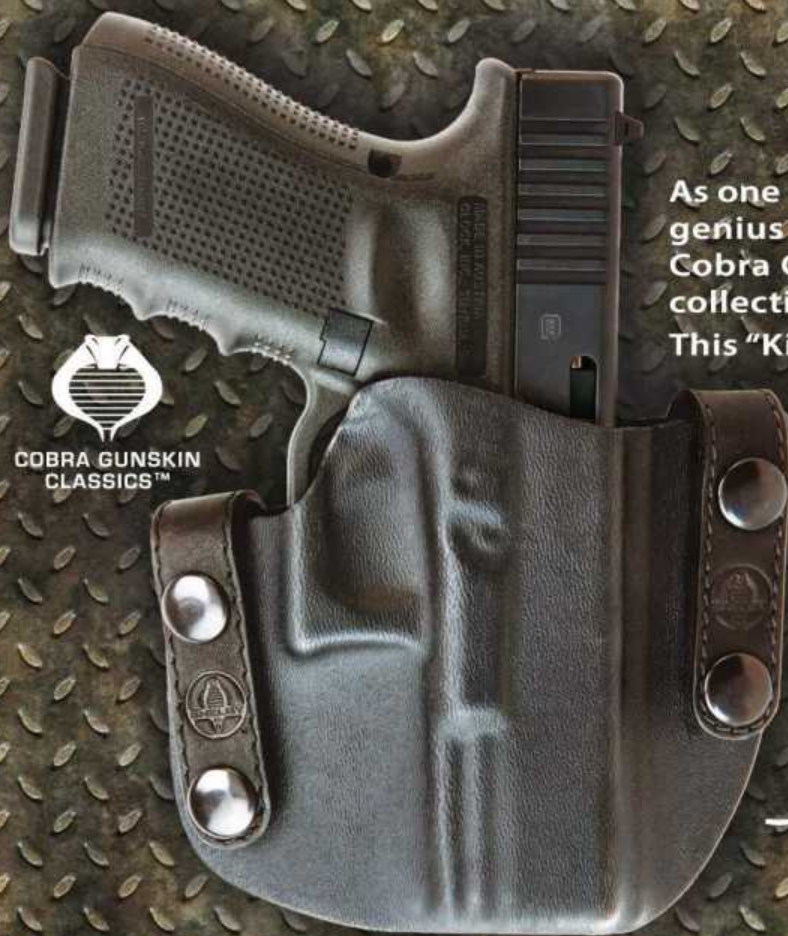
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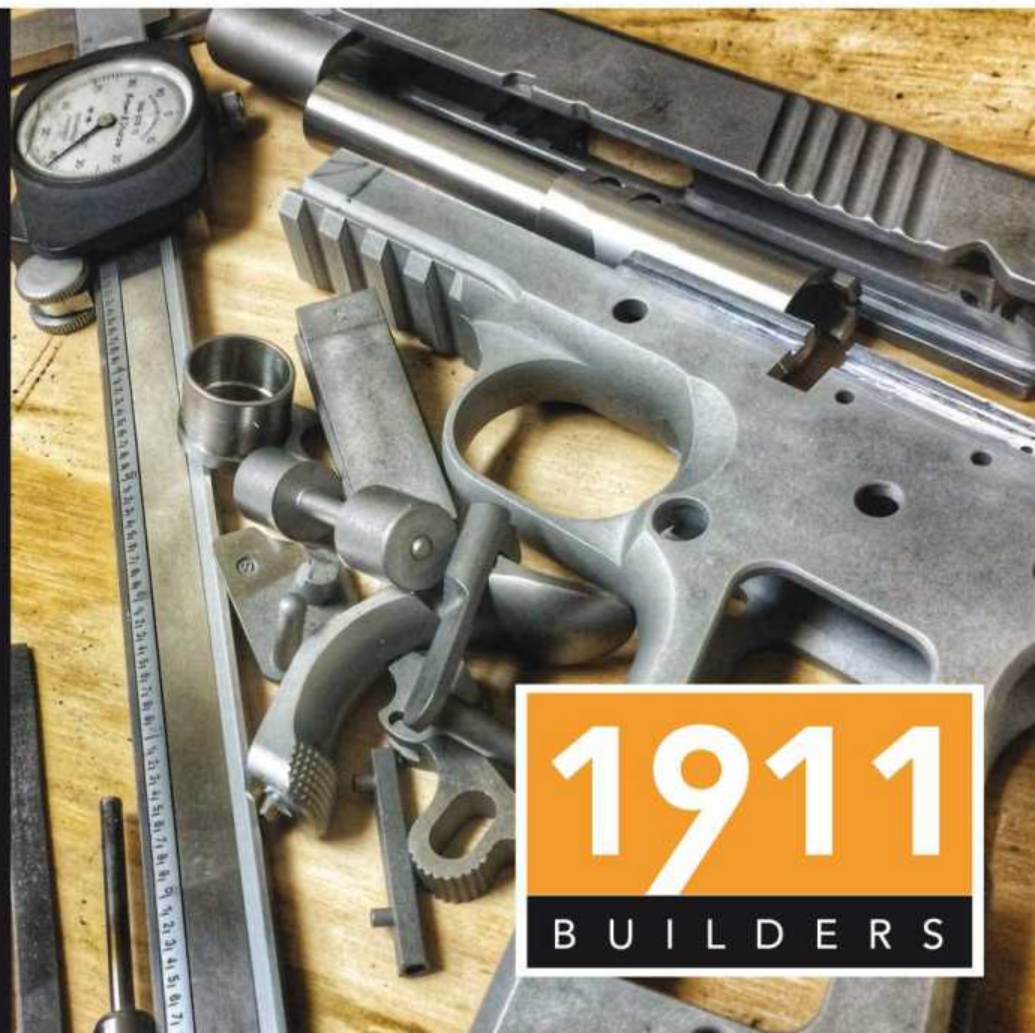
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# WANNA TRADE PATCHES?

Every man and woman in the military finds their niche, either through happenstance, incredible talent, or sheer determination. This month we're featuring some patch choices that pay homage to the military occupational specialty (MOS) and tactical roles filled by those service people whose professions could be fodder for a more hardcore episode of *Dirty Jobs*. See if your specific duty is represented on one of these patches.

Although the role of space shuttle gunner hasn't come to fruition yet, you helicopter door gunners are getting your props. Ground pounders on the front lines, forcing their way into unfriendly territory, are getting their work recognized with a couple different choices. For EOD personnel living the real-life *Hurt Locker*, your likeness is seen here too. Special operation forces, as well as fans of video games, are represented with a set of wearable characters from *Call of Duty: Ghosts*. And while he might not be an MOS per se, Ken Hackathorn is arguably one of the most knowledgeable firearms instructors walking the Earth, so naturally there's a morale patch to honor his status as Jedi Master of the tactical world. **R**



## 1 MAKE:

Mil-Spec Monkey

## PATCH:

Shuttle Doorgunner

## COLORWAY:

ACU (shown), arid, SWAT

## MSRP:

\$6

## URL:

[www.milspecmonkey.com/store/](http://www.milspecmonkey.com/store/)

## 2 MAKE:

Mil-Spec Monkey

## PATCH:

EOD Running

## COLORWAY:

ACU, desert, forest, MultiCam, SWAT

## MSRP:

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## 3 MAKE:

5.11 Tactical

## PATCH:

Breacher Patch

## COLORWAY:

Blue (shown), brown, grey

## MSRP:

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## URL:

[www.511tactical.com](http://www.511tactical.com)

## 4 MAKE:

Mil-Spec Monkey

## PATCH:

MLD - Major League Doorkicker

## COLORWAY:

ACU-dark, ACU-light, arid, full color (shown)

## MSRP:

\$5

## URL:

[www.milspecmonkey.com/store/](http://www.milspecmonkey.com/store/)

## 5 MAKE:

SKD Tactical

## PATCH:

SKD Obiwan Kenobi Patch

## COLORWAY:

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## MSRP:

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## URL:

[www.skdtac.com](http://www.skdtac.com)

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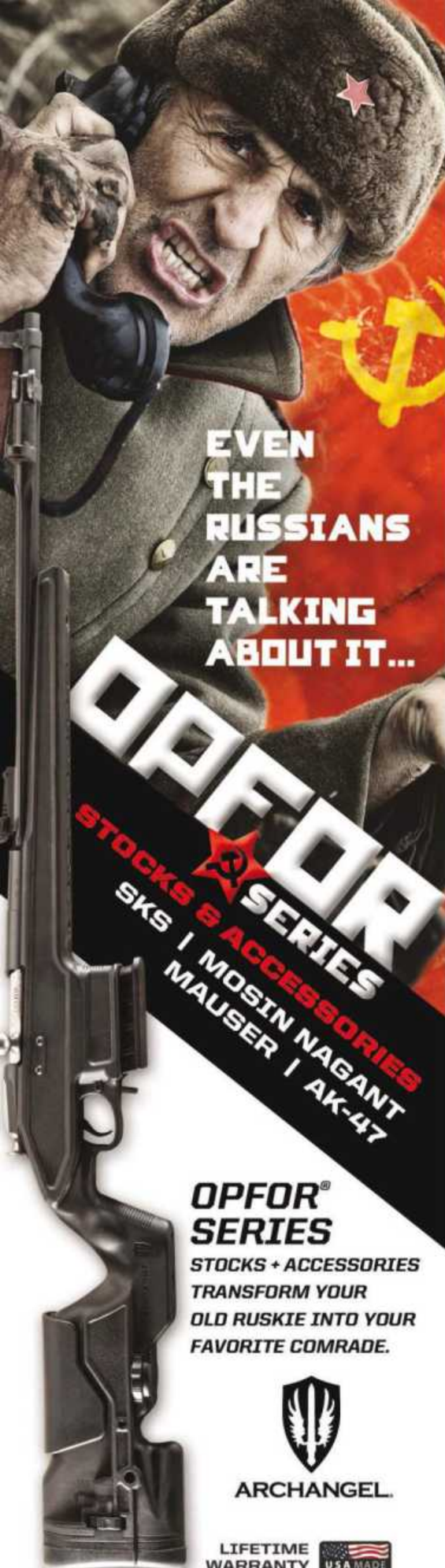


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## EDITOR'S LETTER

When 5.11 Tactical came to us with an idea for the project you're currently reading, we were slightly dubious. We've worked with them before on stuff, and advertising supplements are not exactly a novel concept, but their notion for additional 30-odd pages of RECOIL seemed a bit, well, strange.

When we all met to discuss ideas for content, the conversation went something like, "You know we don't write puff-pieces, right?" Nods of agreement went around the table. "And if we're going to put our name on this, we'll need full editorial control." More approval. "Then I think we can get started."

Make no mistake, 5.11 Tactical is footing the bill for the pages you're holding right now, but the folks there are sufficiently confident in the quality of their work that rather than turn it into a printed infomercial, they're happy to let the products speak for themselves. Which these days, when every marketing dollar must be tracked click by click, takes a big pair of cajones and the confidence that comes with being a market leader in the field.

So without further ado, we present *Loadout*, where you'll get tips for assembling a bug-out bag for the conditions and threats in your AOR, learn about how not to piss off your significant other at the range, take a look at one of the very first Glock 43s to be worked over by Zev Technologies, and use TACFIT to build strength and mobility specifically for shooting. If you like what you see, let the guys and gals at 5.11 know you appreciate their idea, and maybe we can do this again.

Enjoy!

Iain Harrison







# LINES OF GEAR

A GET-HOME BAG IS JUST ONE ELEMENT OF YOUR TACTICAL KIT AND SHTF PLAN

BY DANNY "GATOR" PRITBOR  
PHOTOS BY WODHAWK

No matter your mission — armed professional or defensive-minded citizen — there are common principles that define the preparation for a deadly encounter. Breaking down these principles, we learn how to approach preparedness and where to focus our attention. I refer to these principles as the “pillars that support the gunfighter.” The pyramid chart shown in this story depicts the key layers, each supporting the next. The pyramid cannot stand effectively without each of these in place. This article focuses on concealed carry and the “lines of gear” system of preparedness.

When it comes to equipment, it's a matter of trial and error, constant testing and evaluation periods. If you're not training with the gear you plan to use, how else will you know its capabilities and points of failure?

## EQUIPMENT

Over the years, I have accumulated and resold thousands of dollars' worth of equipment that seemed like a good idea. But, after testing, I found much of it did not fit my criteria. Not long ago, a “low-visibility” bag was a commercial off-the-shelf bag, customized

with an adhesive-backed hook and loop on the inside. It worked for a time, but it was never 100-percent effective. This is not the case today. As America comes out of two long wars and continues to engage in the Global War on Terror, tactical equipment companies and the community benefit from the wealth of counterterrorism and combat experience.

So what gear is best? First, identify your mission and establish the profile you will be working. In the early days

of the war, most high-threat security teams worked in a high-visibility profile: full kit, drop-leg rigs, and pistols mounted high on the chest. Today, outside of law enforcement and military, gears have shifted for U.S. government contractors to go low profile — or even no profile. Many areas are considered non-permissive and are unforgiving if caught with tools of the trade. We need to be practical and functional in approaching concealed carry.







## MISSION PROFILES

### High Visibility

Weapons and equipment are carried openly.

Examples: patrol officers, SWAT members, and military infantry.

### Low Profile

Handgun and armor are worn under a cover shirt. Slight printing is not a major concern.

Affiliation can be displayed if needed. Long-guns stored in a vehicle, ready to go.

Examples: Plain-clothes police, government low-profile protection teams.

### No Profile (or “Zero Signature”)

Cover shirt worn over equipment. Holsters selected specifically for covert carry. No armor.

No printing permitted.

For low-vis teams in non-permissive areas, claiming affiliation is a last resort. Operate, carry, and transport all equipment in a fashion that does not draw attention to a trained eye. Experienced observers will spot low-vis gear, bulges under clothes, and physical movements; all tell-tales of an armed individual.

Examples: Government no-profile protection teams. Also, defensive-minded civilians could fall into this category.







## LINES OF GEAR

Violent crime, terrorism, and environmental catastrophes leave us living under constant threat. Our goal should be to prove effective in any circumstance and in all conditions. We do this by laying out lines of gear.

The overall concept is a three-layer system whereby essential fighting gear is on your person, carried daily. You have trained with it, and it is the minimum needed to engage in a fight. The extended parts of these lines (line two and three) are considered your “get-home bags.” Filled with support items, these will assist you during a time of crisis.

These lines will allow you to break down how you carry your tools. What I have listed is based on my experiences using this methodology and is meant to be a template — customize these lines to fit your mission and profile. There are essentials you need to have, and then build from.

A common theme in all three lines is weapon and ammunition, medical kit, and communication. In these areas, the lines are designed to overlap, supporting each other. Depending on many factors, though, the first line might be all you have to work with.

## First-Line Gear

Carried on your body and is the minimum to fight with:

- › Pistol
- › Ammunition (amount is mission dependent)
- › Medical gear: tourniquet, hemostatic and/or compression bandage
- › Small knife or multitool
- › Flashlight
- › Mobile phone

Depending on mission and threat level, add:

- › Compass/GPS
- › Emergency cash
- › Passport and credentials
- › Personal recovery kit/escape-and-evasion kit

When it comes to the first-line gear, one critical error is not carrying spare ammunition for your weapon. Also, carry some sort of low-profile medical kit with at least a tourniquet and an Israeli bandage or one with a hemostatic agent. These items are meant to be used on you; friends with guns should carry their own. Have a way to plug any holes you weren't born with. Obviously, you should have medical kit to cover your family and other folks you may want to assist. That is why we have a second and third line of gear. Larger more extensive medical kits can be kept there.

When traveling to high-threat areas or restrictive gun zones where weapons may not be allowed, build your first-line gear around things you are allowed to carry. Craft ways to conceal a personal recovery kit and edged weapons in your clothing. (See the new 5.11 Tactical Apex Pants). If you can't carry a firearm, have a plan and remember you're not out of the fight.





### Second-Line Gear

- Go bag or chest-rig/armor
- Medium-size trauma med kit
- Booboo kit
- 550 cord
- Small roll of duct tape
- Spare batteries for GPS, optics, and flashlight
- Snacks
- Notepad and pen
- GPS
- Seatbelt cutter
- Multitool
- Charging cables for electronics
- Headlamp
- Glass breaker/window punch
- Maps
- Cash
- Depending on mission and threat level, add:
  - Flashlight/signal kit/strobes
  - Rifle
  - Ammunition and additional magazines



Second-line gear can be configured in a number of ways, using small slings packs, medium-sized back packs, and even chest rigs. It all depends on the mission and/or purpose. If you opt for a long-gun as a part of the second-line gear, store it with your bag. A 5.11 Tactical 4-Banger Bag would be a good fit for a second line bag.

Be ready to fight from your second line bag. I've placed my rifle ammunition in a rolled-up lightweight bandoleer or chest rig. This provides a couple of options. I can access the ammunition from the bag, or place it on my body.





### Third-Line Gear

If you need to break into this line of equipment, chances are things are bad and getting worse. Therefore, the following gear should go in a three-day pack or larger:

- Additional ammo in a chest rig or bandoleer; staged to fight
- Spare handgun, magazines/ammo, holster, and belt
- Spare mobile phone
- Helmet and night-vision goggles (mission dependent)
- Rifle
- GPS
- Emergency cash and credit cards
- Copies of identification
- Urban SERE kit
- Communications support items (solar-powered phone charger)
- Extensive medical kit
- Water
- At least one day's worth of food rations
- Satellite phone
- Headlamp
- Signal kit
- Space blanket
- Fire-starting kit
- Baby wipes
- Multitool
- 550 cord



Third-line gear is designed to haul the high-profile kit considered part of the disaster plan. Keeping a spare handgun with ammunition, holster, and mag pouches is optional in the event you need to arm a buddy and/or you are displaced from your resources due to unforeseen circumstances, i.e. a weather disaster or civil disturbance. Having a spare handgun can bring peace of mind. Take it a step further and make sure it's the same type and caliber as your everyday carry so magazines and ammunition are interchangeable.

Communications capabilities, along with the items that support them, are commonly overlooked, but having a PACE communication plan in place can be a lifesaver. PACE stands for primary, alternate, contingency and emergency. If your primary is your mobile phone,

what happens when the towers are down? Having a layered approach will set you up for success.

Once you have considered the purpose of your third-line gear, it's up to you to decide in what configuration you carry your long-gun. Rifles can be broken down and consolidated into a pack that allows for easy carry. You want this line to be portable; don't pack the kitchen sink if you really don't need it. Choose wisely and be practical.

Take the time with your family to establish the game plan for safety and success in the fight. Don't take shortcuts when purchasing equipment. Seek out reputable and experienced teachers in your area to assist in tactical readiness development for everyone in your family. Always be ready. 🛡️

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Danny "Gator" Pritbor has a combined 23 years of experience as a U.S. Marine, a law-enforcement SWAT officer, a protective special agent, and a contract government security specialist. He has spent extensive time conducting low-profile security operations in high-threat areas throughout the Middle East. As a firearms and tactics instructor, Gator has taught for private and governmental agencies, including the SureFire Institute, Strategos International, and the U.S. State Department Antiterrorism Assistance Program. He's currently the director of FireBase Combat Studies Group LLC, and remains active as a government security specialist.

➤ [www.firebasecsg.com](http://www.firebasecsg.com)



01 APEX

## APEX PANTS

It's called the Apex because that's the highest point of something. When it comes to flexible and functional performance, you won't surpass the speed and versatility the Apex offers. Made with 5.11's proprietary Flex-Tac® mechanical stretch canvas, these pants feature a CCW-ready comfort waistband, internal flex cuff pocket, two hidden handcuff key pockets, zippered thigh pockets, internal magazine storage, and deep reinforced main pockets. Add to that a Teflon® finish for stain and soil resistance, a fully gusseted crotch, and articulated knees, they're ideal for anything — from a day at the range to SERE situations.



### MODEL:

Apex Pants

### COLORWAY:

Battle Brown, Black, Dark Navy, Khaki, TDU Green

### MSRP:

\$84.99

02 CIRRUS

## CIRRUS PANTS

5.11 prides itself on creating the Cirrus Pants, designed specifically with women's preferences in mind. These pants strike the perfect balance between comfort, durability, and mobility. With all the qualities tactical pants should offer, 5.11 also went the extra mile to ensure they look fashionable both on and off the range. The Flex-Tac® mechanical stretch fabric, Teflon finish, and fully gusseted crotch for maximum movement give you the long-lasting features you've come to expect. We also added nine pockets to hold magazines, a full-size cell phone, and any number of other things to provide the extra practicality you won't find in any other pant.



### MODEL:

Cirrus Pants

### COLORWAY:

Black, Stone, Storm

### MSRP:

\$74.99

03 RIDGELINE

## RIDGELINE PANTS

Have you ever wanted to buy tactical pants that were discreet on the "tactical," but didn't sacrifice the elements that make them strong, comfortable, and pragmatic? 5.11's Ridgeline Pants are exactly that, and the best low-vis pants money can buy. The Flex-Tac® mechanical stretch fabric with reinforcement at seams and stress points, gusseted crotch, and concealed AR magazine pockets are the features that make these pants both robust and inconspicuous. And the Teflon finish keeps them coming back for more punishment. If you're looking for pants that will hold up to the harshest of challenges time and time again, look no further.



### MODEL:

Ridgeline Pants

### COLORWAY:

Battle Brown, Black, Field Green, Stone, Storm

### MSRP:

\$74.99

04 STRYKE

## STRYKE PANTS

When both male and female customers asked 5.11 to create the toughest pants on the market, the company listened. After a great deal of time, energy, research, and fieldwork, they created the 5.11 Stryke™ Pants with reinforcements in all the right places. The 12 pockets give you more than enough space to carry whatever you'll need, and the Flex-Tac® mechanical stretch fabric and stain-resistant Teflon materials will hold up to the most demanding conditions you can throw at them. With a self-adjusting CCW-ready waistband (men's only), you'll quickly agree that all this hard work paid off — for you.



### MODEL:

Stryke Pants

### COLORWAY:

(Men's) Battle Brown, Black, Charcoal, Dark Navy, Khaki, Storm, TDU Green, Tundra (Women's) Black, Dark Navy, Khaki, Storm, TDU Green

### MSRP:

\$74.99





## IGNITOR BACKPACK

The Ignitor Backpack is the ultimate piece of kit for the rugged outdoorsman. It combines the strength to carry a variety of heavy gear, but also the ergonomics to help you haul it in a balanced, non-intrusive way. That means the lightweight, tough 840-denier nylon bottom and sturdy 300-denier ripstop polyester body will hold up to the elements of the outdoors and weight of your payload. Adjustable and removable load-bearing belt panels are perfectly suited for holsters. The Zephyr suspension system with aerospace mesh, shove-it pockets, zippered side pockets, and MOLLE-compatible exterior allow abundant storage without concentrating weight all in one area. Lashing, load-suspension, and compressions straps keep things secure, while a hydration compartment will accept a standard-sized hydration pack. A TIER Rifle scabbard can also be added for long-gun transportation as well as additional Ignitor Pouches for storing more gear.



05 IGNITOR

**MODEL:**  
Ignitor Backpack

**COLORWAY:**  
Black, Sandstone

**MSRP:**  
\$169.99





Versatility is a key aspect of designing a modular carry-bag system. 5.11 Tactical took this to heart when designing the UCR (Urban Casualty Response) System in collaboration with combat and tactical medics, patrol officers, medical professionals, and civilians who may be forced into a first-responder role in the event of an active shooter or mass casualty incident (AS/MCI). Consisting of a Slingpack, Thigh Rig, IFAK Pouch, and Litter, the system's practicality and ease of access to an assortment of medical supplies is setting a new standard.

The choices don't stop there though. The design was meant to be inconspicuous and effective, allowing a wide variety of gear to be packed. Since the popularity of EDC and go-bags is becoming increasingly prevalent, 5.11 kept that adaptability in mind when considering what materials could be incorporated into the UCR System in a discrete way. The robust lightweight materials, diversity in storage compartments, and interchangeable carry modes give the users exactly what they want — the ability to tailor everything to their personal preference.

We're sure the UCR System's components can suit your needs. Looking to prepare your own first-aid kit? Check. Need to outfit your daily driver with a storage system for an emergency? Done. Want to store critical supplies on your person, while keeping your hands free to carry other items? No problem. Interested in a portable carry system to evacuate an injured person. We've got you covered there too. The possibilities are limited only by your imagination.



## UCR SLINGPACK

Be aware, be prepared, and have the right first-responder gear. 5.11's UCR Slingpack is an ambidextrous carry bag built from lightweight, rugged 1,050-denier nylon. It features a drop-front opening with side retention lashes, haul handles, interior pockets with bungee retention, a customizable pull-out ID panel, and large front web patch panel. The combination of carry options and compartments are designed to keep your hemorrhage control gear organized and easy to access.



**MODEL:**  
UCR Slingpack  
**COLORWAY:**  
Black, Sandstone, Storm  
**MSRP:**  
Starting at \$77.99

## UCR SLINGPACK LOADOUT

1. Four to six CAT Tourniquets
2. Triage Tags
3. Two to four QuickClot Combat Gauze packs
4. Asst NAR ETD Gauze packs  
(4 inches flat, 4 inches rolled, 6 inches rolled)
5. One SAM Chest Seal
6. Two to three 14-gram Chest Needles
7. Gloves
8. Shears
9. 5.11 Rescue knife
10. Marker (for tourniquets)



## UCR THIGH RIG

The UCR Thigh Rig is small enough to be carried easily, but also hold a significant amount of gear for its size, including space for two AR magazines. The drop-down zippered compartment with bungee tie-downs will allow the user to quickly retrieve one to two blow-out kits and a number of other essentials. The MOLLE and web platform compatibility also enables the user to fasten other accessories to its surface. Built with 1,050-denier nylon and breathable aerspace mesh, it's light and tough enough for any first-responder to rest assured the gear they're carrying is safe and ready to go.

### UCR THIGH RIG LOADOUT

1. Two CAT Tourniquets
2. Triage Tags
3. One to two QuickClot Combat Gauze packs
4. Asst NAR ETD Gauze packs (4 inches rolled, 6 inches rolled)
5. One to two 14-gram Chest Needles
6. Marker (for tourniquets)
7. Two 30-round AR Magazines (or equivalent)

#### MODEL:

UCR Thigh Rig

#### COLORWAY:

Black, Sandstone, Storm

#### MSRP:

Starting at \$28



07 THIGH RIG

## UCR IFAK POUCH

Your vehicle is one of the most important parts of your daily life. That's why 5.11 created a pouch for your car or truck's headrest that'd hold all the right gear. The UCR IFAK can store your blow-out kit and other medical essentials when you're on the go, and can even attach to any MOLLE or web platform. The drop-down zippered compartment and light-colored interior will allow you to quickly access and identify the gear you might need at a moment's notice. The bungee tie-downs provide increased stability to keep items from getting jarred loose. Make sure your means of mobility is prepped with the right kit.

#### MODEL:

UCR IFAK Pouch

#### COLORWAY:

Black, Sandstone, Storm

#### MSRP:

starting at \$21.50



08 IFAK

## UCR LITTER

Even for the strongest of people, trying to carry a wounded individual can be difficult without the right gear. 5.11's UCR Litter is an innovative way to provide the mobility of a stretcher in a compact, strong, lightweight package. Built from tough 1,050-denier nylon, it can serve as a one-man carry system or two- to four-man carry system. The UCR Litter is two-thirds body length with leg and waist straps, and four grab handles. It can easily be rolled up and stored for rapid deployment and recovery of an injured person.



#### MODEL:

UCR Litter

#### COLORWAY:

Black, Sandstone, Storm

#### MSRP:

starting at \$46



09 LITTER

### The UCR Litter can be configured for one-man carry.

1. Situate litter so buckles and straps (orange) are oriented on top.
2. Guide straps through lower haul handles over subject's thigh to create cradle.
3. Snap buckles into place to create shoulder straps. (Top haul handles are not used for one-man carry.)
4. Lift subject with backpack-like approach and carry to safety.









## ZEV IS KNOWN FOR ITS CUSTOM WORK ON AUSTRIA'S FAVORITE PLASTIC PISTOL. WE TAKE ITS FIRST G43 FOR A SPIN.

BY IAIN HARRISON  
PHOTOS BY STRAIGHT 8

The Glock 43 launched to much fanfare and immediately became one of those guns that everyone had an opinion about. Whether the commenter had actually seen or shot the pistol was beside the point, but we could all glean from heated online discussions that the new gun was too big, too small, held too few rounds, was too light, too heavy, too expensive, and that everyone was just going to stick with their brand XYZ. And it's been flying off dealers' shelves ever since.

As a stock gun, the G43 is a good choice for a concealed carry piece. Could it be better? Sure, and that's where Zev Technologies comes in.

We choose small guns because they're easier to carry and as a result, are less likely to be left behind when actually needed. The downside of small, easily concealed pistols is that they're notoriously hard to shoot well — ever seen one place above the fold at an IDPA match? Thought so. Their short sight radius, skinny frames, abbreviated grip dimensions, and snappy recoil all count against them when it

comes down to placing good hits in vital areas. If the gun in question has a so-so trigger, the problem is compounded. Because of this combination of factors, any claimed improvements to a standard gun tend to get looked at a lot more closely than if they were made to a full-sized service pistol. For example, you could add all kinds of crap to a Beretta 92 and the results would be masked by its porky grip, 6-inch sight radius, and 33-ounce unloaded weight — add the same crap to something half its mass and only two-thirds as wide, and things tend to get noticeable real fast.

Zev's been in the business of customizing Glockes for long enough to gain a loyal following on the competition circuit, while also offering modifications for customers that have a more serious purpose. It's taken a critical look at where the base gun might be improved and formulated a series of modifications that address some of its shortcomings.

Starting with the grip, fine stippling has been added to critical surfaces,

ensuring that it doesn't move in the hands under recoil. They've done a good job of balancing the need for an aggressive texture against the requirement for comfort. We carried the G43 for a few weeks in an appendix rig under a T-shirt and were surprisingly chafe-free for the duration.







The trigger guard has been undercut, allowing the shooter to get a slightly higher grip on the gun. Because the stock magazine has a pinky shelf, ZEV's stippling effort encompasses the extension, as well. For those of us with baboon mitts, the mag extension is essential if we're to get all of the master hand onto the gun. Glock walked a fine line between chopping the grip to minimal dimensions, while leaving a 9mm that was actually shootable. While it's easy enough to add length and capacity to the mag via aftermarket floor-plates, it's a lot more difficult to make it shorter.

With the stock slide clamped in a CNC machine, a 1/8-inch ball end mill is used to create gripping surfaces on

the top and sides. Those of us who prefer to manipulate the slide forward of the ejection port can now rejoice, as press checks have just gotten a whole lot more positive versus the stock version. Zev's Gunfighter serration pattern is attractive, but it clashes somewhat with the slide cuts that arrive from the factory. We hear that aftermarket slides are not too far off, so hopefully this fashion faux pas will be alleviated in future models...if that sort of thing bothers you.

After emerging from the machining center, the slide is sent off for refinishing. While the EPA and State of California won't permit anyone to use the original Tennifer surface conversion, Zev's choice of a Diamond Like Coating (DLC) finish is a close second in terms of wear resistance and lubricity. For a roundup of finish options and the pros and cons of each, check out RECOIL Issue 13.

On its return to the shop, Zev's worker elves turn their attention to the gun's sights and trigger. A short sight radius tends to magnify errors in sight alignment, so quality

hardware becomes so much more important. Stock Glock sights are a running joke in the industry, usually referred to as "dovetail fillers" and unceremoniously ditched at the earliest opportunity. Our test pistol employed Trijicon's superb HD series sights, which are some of the best available for a carry gun, featuring a 0.14-inch wide, tritium-illuminated, high-visibility front sight, mated to a slightly undercut and serrated rear. The rear sight also incorporates tritium lamps, but these are subdued in order to keep attention focused where it should be. As a bonus, the leading edge of the rear sight forms a subtle hook that makes one-handed slide manipulation if not easy, then certainly easier.

The front sight's in-your-face width, coupled with a generous U-shaped notch in the rear make for rapid acquisition, particularly at the short distances at which this pistol is intended to be used. Due to our contrarian nature, we set up a USP-SA BCC silhouette target at 50 yards and whacked it 12 times with two magazines' worth of ammo. Should you need to make a shot across a parking lot, it's good to know the gun is capable of cashing that check.

The Zev's trigger is a major contributor to the G43's ability to make difficult shots, turning the original spongy factory unit into a more refined single action. And while a striker-fired gun will never be in the same league as 1911, this one's at least playing the same sport. Ours tripped at 6 pounds, with a reasonably crisp break, a smidge of overtravel and a short, tactile reset, which is a pretty decent combination for a gun you might have to bet





6.3"





## ZEV TECHNOLOGIES Z43

**CALIBER:**

9mm

**BARREL LENGTH:**

3.4 inches

**OVERALL LENGTH:**

6.3 inches

**MAGAZINE CAPACITY:**

6 rounds

**WEIGHT UNLOADED:**

1.1 pounds

**MSRP:**

\$1,450

**URL:**[www.zevtechnologies.com](http://www.zevtechnologies.com)

The suppressor is SIG's SRD9K which was developed for an overseas contract and is not currently available in the U.S.

your life on. It achieves this without using lightened striker springs (which might compromise reliability when using ammunition with hard primers) and instead employs the company's proprietary Fulcrum trigger bar, along with a highly polished factory striker.

Compared to a stock trigger, the flatter face of the Zev unit makes the pull weight seem lighter than it actually is. Should you ever feel like indulging your masochistic side with a 500-round range session, at least your fingers will be blistered from stuffing mags, not the factory trigger mounted safety — this one's three times wider and a lot more comfortable.

The Zev G43 is available as an off-the-shelf item, ready for delivery to your FFL. If you're able to resist

the siren song of instant gratification and want instead to roll your own, then most of the necessary parts will be available on their website by the time this issue hits the shelves. Of course, if you're really into the whole self-denial thing, then you might be able to wait for some of the other goodies currently in development — think slides and barrels — that will kick things up even further. Either way, they've provided a good example of what's possible in a single-stack, polymer carry gun. Perhaps the most ringing endorsement came from a training partner who often carries while running in the backcountry. After burning through just seven rounds with the Zev G43, his HK USP compact was slapped down on the tailgate in disgust, accompanied by a loud, "I need this!"



# HOLSTERS FOR YOUR NEW HEATER

Holsters are to men what handbags and shoes are to women. Unless of course you happen to be one of the women mentioned in Diana Hufstедler's article, in which case forget we just said that and please don't hurt us. As gunslinging guys, we find a need for a different holster for whatever the occasion warrants. Everyday carry to the store? New holster. Business trip to the Midwest? New holster. Opening night of that new S&M club? Well, let's not go there. Alas, as soon as a new pistol arrives on the market, the selection process begins anew.

## INTERROGATING THE USUAL SUSPECTS

The Q series clip offers the ability to carry a Glock 43 to the beach, in a bathing suit, but isn't as easy to re-holster. That said, it has a very low signature, can be worn with or without a belt, and holds the firearm securely.

The Reign tactical offers a very stylish and modern take on the holster, but the downside is the overlaying piece of Kydex — it can get snagged on foreign (or familiar) objects.

Some old-timers always compare leather holsters to Cadillac automobiles — sometimes you just want it to be built for comfort. In that vein, Kusiak offers an incredibly comfortable appendix carry leather holster.

The Deltac Concepts holsters are well-made and the inside-waistband (IWB) mag pouch was very minimal. But for super high-speed IWB mag pouches, we're big fans of the Alpha Carry System offering.

With proven companies like Vigintac, Deltac Concepts, Q-Series, Tuctite, and Alpha Carry Systems, in the marketplace, there's no longer any need to wait three months for what should be an off-the-shelf item.

— By Jake Swanson

### 01 ECLIPSE II

**MAKE:**  
Deltac Concepts  
**MODEL:**  
Eclipse II  
**MSRP:**  
Starting at \$75  
**URL:**  
[www.deltaconcepts.com](http://www.deltaconcepts.com)

### 02 STEALTH

**MAKE:**  
Q-Series  
**MODEL:**  
Stealth  
**MSRP:**  
Starting at \$40  
**URL:**  
[www.qseriesllc.com](http://www.qseriesllc.com)

### 03 GLOCK 43 IWB

**MAKE:**  
Kusiak Leather  
**MODEL:**  
Glock 43 IWB Holster  
**MSRP:**  
Starting at \$45  
**URL:**  
[www.kusiakleather.com](http://www.kusiakleather.com)

### 04 SECRET SENTRY

**MAKE:**  
Vigilance Tactical  
**MODEL:**  
Secret Sentry  
**MSRP:**  
Starting at \$50  
**URL:**  
[www.vigilancetactical.com](http://www.vigilancetactical.com)

### 05 BELT CARRY

**MAKE:**  
Alpha Carry Systems  
**MODEL:**  
Belt Carry Holster  
**MSRP:**  
Starting at \$50  
**URL:**  
[www.alphacarrysystems.com](http://www.alphacarrysystems.com)

### 06 IWB G43

**MAKE:**  
Tuctite Holsters  
**MODEL:**  
IWB G43  
**MSRP:**  
Starting at \$59  
**URL:**  
[www.tuctite.co](http://www.tuctite.co)

### 06 SLIM REIGN

**MAKE:**  
Reign Tactical  
**MODEL:**  
Slim Reign  
**MSRP:**  
Starting at \$50  
**URL:**  
[www.reigntactical.com](http://www.reigntactical.com)





# HOW NOT TO SCREW UP A GOOD THING

THE DOs AND DON'Ts  
OF INTRODUCING WOMEN TO SHOOTING

BY DIANA HUFSTEDLER  
PHOTOS BY 5.11 TACTICAL





From left to right:  
Allie Barrett,  
Janna Reeves,  
Jessica Hook,  
Diana Hufstedler,  
Sammi King,  
Corinne Mosher,  
and Michelle Waldran

**You know who you are.** You're the guy who shoots a lot, maybe competes a little. You sometimes browse the online profiles of female shooters, secretly wondering "Why can't my woman be like that?" Well, guess what? She can. And she probably wants to. But, chances are, you're approaching the matter the wrong way. Now, I'm not a firearms instructor, but I compete a lot and I often get asked by female (and male) friends to take them to the shooting range for the first time. And, like many people, I learn from my own experiences about what works and what doesn't when introducing a woman to shooting. Here is my list of do's and don'ts.

**DO teach her the four basic rules of firearm safety.**

**DON'T quiz her on it in the middle of dinner or while she's getting her makeup done in the morning.**

I shouldn't have to list them. Honestly, if you don't know these rules, you have no business teaching someone else how to shoot. Being safe is fundamental to any sport, but particularly when you're dealing with objects that put holes in stuff. I've been repeating these four lines to my daughter since she was little and lately I've entered the practice of printing them on the back of my card and handing them out to new shooters. However you choose to approach it, just don't skip this step even if — no, especially if — she claims she's been around guns her whole life. And don't ambush her to recite them at your will — she'll memorize them by herself, I promise.

**DO ask a friend to teach her, preferably another woman.**

**DON'T try to teach her yourself.**

Unless you want a war at home. Women don't like to be told what to do by their significant others (well, maybe some do, but I'm pretty sure those are called unicorns). My husband tried it a few times — I nearly scratched his eyes out. Your best course of action is to track down a reputable female instructor in your area. Failing that, enlist the help of any good shooter (male, female, hired gun, or family friend). They'll probably do and say the same things you would, but they have a major advantage: they're not you! Hubby does that sometimes — when I make mistakes, he asks a buddy to come and tell me to try this and that. Works fine, and preserves world peace.

**DO give her firm verbal commands.**

**DON'T yell at her.**

Giving clear, firm commands to someone handling a firearm is a good thing. For one, they are (or should be)

WOMEN  
DON'T  
LIKE TO  
BE TOLD  
WHAT TO  
DO BY  
THEIR  
SIGNIFICANT  
OTHERS.







wearing hearing protection and it will be a little hard to hear you. Second, you need to ensure they are safe and follow directions. But yelling at a woman and making her cry is a sure way to guarantee she won't come back. Ever.

**DO** introduce her to firearm safety, shape, and functionality before shooting.

**DON'T** just hand her a large-caliber cannon and watch her fall on her butt.

Ironically, what you say and do before you even hand her a firearm is even more important in making her comfortable than shooting itself. One of the most common mistakes men make is to give a high-recoil firearm to a female newbie the first time and watch as it violently kicks her back, or worse — jumps out of her hands and hits her in the 10.

WHAT YOU  
SAY AND  
DO BEFORE  
YOU EVEN  
HAND HER  
A FIREARM  
IS EVEN  
MORE IM-  
PORTANT IN  
MAKING HER  
COMFORT-  
ABLE THAN  
SHOOTING  
ITSELF.

Don't laugh; not funny! She will work up to large calibers, just like I did, but shock therapy is not appropriate here. Ideally, show her various guns, explain how they function and begin with a training pistol such as the SIRT I like to use. Then proceed with something tame like a .22 or possibly 9mm. No, .40, .45, or .44 Magnum are not tame. If you start with any of those calibers, she will either give up or jerk the trigger for eternity.

**DO** teach her the basics.

**DON'T** try to teach her everything all at once.

Posture, grip, sight picture, and trigger control are the most important skills for every shooter, regardless of their level or gender. Sounds simple enough, but lecturing on it all at once won't do you (or her) any good. Pace yourself and explain one thing at a time.

**DO** bring her along with your buddies to the range.

**DON'T** treat her like one of the dudes.

If she likes to (learn how to) shoot, she's cool, all right. So bring her along! Contrary to popular belief, many women enjoy manly hobbies, myself included. Shooting, hunting, fishing, off-roading, poker, golf, strip clubs... OK, maybe not the latter, but you get the idea. However, just because she enjoys these things doesn't mean she's not a lady. So keep the burping, farting, and chest bumps for your bros and treat her with care and respect.

**DO** buy her a gun.

**DON'T** pick it out yourself.

If you like her, you'll buy her a gun. If you love her, you'll let her pick it out herself. And don't be stingy — some of us have really good (meaning expensive) tastes.

**DO** repeat instructions.

**DON'T** get agitated if she makes the same mistake more than once.

Despite our reputation, we women actually follow instructions very well. The problem is, we overthink and often have too many things on our mind, so we get distracted or forget. Expect to repeat yourself often. Don't ever say, "She's just not getting it" — unless you enjoy getting slapped upside the head with a full magazine...

**DO** gently push her to lean forward.

**DON'T** shove her neck like an animal.

One of the hardest things for women to learn is to be more aggressive with their stance and lean forward. It just feels weird and unnatural at first. Do explain to her the benefits (stability, recoil control, etc.) and do gently push or tap her back to remind her to lean forward. Squeezing or shoving her neck while she is shooting may result in unfavorable, potentially deadly consequences. Or at least couch condemnation for a week. Just don't do it!

**DO** give her constructive criticism mixed with positive reinforcement.

**DON'T** constantly point out only what she's doing wrong.

I pride myself with having a thick skin, taking criticism well, and generally being able to poke fun at my own downfalls. Yet, it really hurts my feelings when my own husband constantly tears my performance apart. In recent months, he's gotten in this annoying habit of approaching me as soon as I finish a stage and volunteering the information of everything I did wrong. Way to kick me while I'm down, babe! Instead of sticking your foot in your mouth, try praising her for the things she did right. And, instead of pointing out her mistakes,



try suggestions along the lines of “Why don’t you try this. It will help you accomplish that.” And just like that, instead of a jerk, you’re a hero!

**DO introduce a timer. Eventually.**

**DON’T shove that thing in her face and remind her how slow she really is.**

Buzzers make us nervous. Period. I actually have a theory there is something in their sound frequency that scrambles brain waves — male and female. But, like any shooter, eventually we have to try doing things faster and the only way to measure progress is by timing it. You should, however, be tactful about it. Act like it’s no big deal, keep the timer behind her, but close enough to hear, and never say, “That was too slow.” Instead, make a game out of it and try, “That was awesome, but I know you can do it faster.” And remember, comparing her speed to yours is not a good idea — until she starts beating your time.

**DO teach her double taps.**

**DON’T be a splits Nazi.**

Double tapping is one of those weird skills you struggle with and one day you just miraculously get it. Teaching her how to double tap early on will save her a lot of frustration long term. I was not smart enough to do that and struggled for a long time with being unable to double tap. I had an irrational fear I’ll miss with my second shot and I genuinely thought I couldn’t move my trigger finger that fast! What finally did it for me? Hubby set up a steel popper about 10 yards away and told me to shoot it as many times as I can before it falls down. I can comfortably do about six now! But, he did not pressure me or time my splits like he would his own.

**DO teach her different shooting positions.**

**DON’T do it on the first day.**

It would be lovely if we all got into ideal shooting position every time we shot. However, the reality is that in both defensive and competition shooting we are going to be subjected to the most bizarre acrobatic tricks sometimes. While you can’t plan for everything, you’ll do her a favor if you show her some of the more common alternate shooting positions — prone, on one knee, one-handed, laying on your back, etc. Just don’t do that on day one.

**DO encourage her to try competition.**

**DON’T force her or call her a sissy if she is not ready just yet.**

The best approach, in my experience, is to bring her to competitions

welcomes and encourages new shooters and you should take advantage of that. Whatever you do, just don’t tease her or you’ll be stuck with the ever-popular “It’s just not my thing” excuse for eternity.

**DO make it fun.**

**DON’T poke fun at her or call her cute.**

The most important advice, and the one I want to leave you with, is to always make it fun. Laugh, joke around, and don’t be too serious or it will go from recreation to work in no time. And save the poking fun for later, when she’s more confident. Also, don’t call her cute, try badass — she is holding a gun, after all.

Now, I don’t know if men are from Mars and women are from Venus, but we do learn to shoot differently. Follow

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Diana Hufstедler is a three-gun, USPSA, and IDPA competitor, a member of team Taran Tactical Innovations, and a blogger at [www.sassbrassbullets.com](http://www.sassbrassbullets.com). Follow her on [www.facebook.com/diana.hufstедler](https://www.facebook.com/diana.hufstедler) for more pics, videos, and funny gun stuff.



to watch. If there are female competitors there — encourage her to watch them, talk to them and ask questions. It took seeing other women do it to convince me that I can too, and now I hope I can pay it forward. We are a very supportive community that

this advice and I promise you — even if you don’t train the next Annie Oakley, you’re bound to score some brownie points. If nothing else, they’ll come in handy next time you come home and say, “Honey, look what I got from the gun shop”....



# TACTICAL FITNESS

A man with a shaved head and a black polo shirt is holding a rifle. He has a tattoo on his left arm. The background is an American flag.

THE FOUNDER OF  
TACFIT SHOWS HOW TO  
REMOVE THE  
TRAINING PADLOCKS  
FROM YOUR SHOOTING

BY SCOTT SONNON  
PHOTOS BY Q CONCEPTS



Two U.S. Navy SEALs, Seth Lewis and Brett Marihugh, were found dead in April 2015 at the bottom of the Combat Swimmer Training Facility pool at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story in Virginia. The sailors reportedly drowned performing an extreme underwater workout — a preventable tragedy that may have arisen from misunderstanding the purpose of tactical fitness. Tactical drills, scenarios, and simulations pressure-test the edge; tactical fitness should prepare and compensate for rapidly approaching and crossing it.

Confusing the two can result in catastrophe. But even when not fatal, poor training results in preventable harm.

One elite federal law enforcement agency averaged a 31-percent injury rate from the physical training during academy classes: 15 out of every 48 recruits were injured by the training meant to prevent on-the-job injury. After adopting TACFIT (a fitness program I developed for shooters), the agency demonstrated greater average improvement over all of the prior academy classes, with its recruits averaging more pushups and sit-ups and completing the 1.5-mile run exam 1 minute and 22 seconds faster than previous classes. More importantly, they reduced their injury rate to zero — a first in the agency's history.

You can eliminate injuries and create superior performance by distinguishing between two types of forces in the world: driving forces and restrictive forces. While most so-called experts tell you to stomp on the accelerator to push the edge, they neglect suggesting that you disengage the emergency brakes. So, your tires smoke, wear causes tear, and your engine inevitably blows.

Think of your skills as a firearm,

trigger-locked and stored in the glove compartment. Without the keys, it's useless. Physiological padlocks diminish full access to your skills. Regardless of whether we're talking about a world champion, an Olympic athlete, a special operator, or a special agent, in reality, they all perform mostly in an under-recovered, sub-optimal state. They're so good that they manage to do well despite their training, not because of it.

Like them, most people have their skills locked behind aches, pains, stiffness, injuries, and the poor training concepts that created them. These padlocks prevent you from fully entering optimal shooting positions, and stop you from efficiently transitioning between them without the day-after workout recovery pain. I'm talking about everything from tendonitis and bursitis to disc herniation and plantar fasciitis. All of these are 100-percent preventable.

### SHOOT, MOVE, COMMUNICATE

Shoot, move, communicate. In military vernacular this relates to position (fine motor skills), transition (complex motor skills), and respiration (cognitive skills). Under stress, you lose skills in that order: skills like hand-eye coordination, then locomotion, and finally cognitive function, which results in tunnel vision, auditory exclusion, memory loss, decision impairment, time warp, etc. The internal stress of your physiological padlocks combine with the external stress of conflict and more rapidly erodes your skills.

Tactical fitness should train you to recover from performing: to shoot and move and communicate. Breath connects to both branches of your nervous system, so breathing controls

your heart rate, which controls your biochemistry, which enables your fine, complex and cognitive skills.

Let's look at one shooting platform, and how we can prepare to recover from repeatedly drilling it.

### DECONSTRUCTING A SHOOTING POSITION

Danny "Gator" Pritbor of Firebase Combat Studies Group demonstrates this widely accepted pistol shooting position. His upper-body architecture requires equal tension from the supporting elbow, so that recoil management isn't compromised on the "weak" side. He vise-clamps the handgun at the apex of his isosceles.

This thumbs-forward grip (supporting-hand thumb-indexing forward of the trigger guard, and the web of the dominant-hand high in the tang of the pistol) must be strengthened or, under fatigue, it erodes under stress, recoil management then deteriorates, and the entire position falls apart.

### STIMULATE STRENGTH, NOT SKILL

Training specifically for the shooting position's movement, joint position, speed, and type of contraction produces improvement specific exclusively to that position, so specific training yields the greatest improvements for a specific shooting position. The strength carryover of an exercise to the shooting position will only happen if the elements of an exercise are similar in nature to the position. As the degree of similarity between exercise and the skill decrease, the strength carryover decreases and eventually even conflicts and begins to form physiological padlocks.

The conventional pushup is often used as a method of building

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Scott Sonnon was named one of the top 25 trainers in the world by *Men's Fitness* magazine. He is the founder of TACFIT, described as the world's smartest workout by *Men's Health* magazine. He serves as the tactical fitness ambassador for Team 5.11 Tactical and the international director of the TACFIT Academy, with facilities in 33 countries.

[www.TACFITAcademy.com](http://www.TACFITAcademy.com)





The Pistol Pushup

strength, but from a biomechanical standpoint, it is not at all similar to the shooting platform. The vise-clamp does not exist and the isosceles triangle of tension is actually inverted.

Imagine this position vertically to see the lack of strength transfer: zero grip confirmation with no potential for the elbow to resist recoil. It often results in shoulder and neck strain and it lacks core activation and proper forward flexion spinal alignment.

Although tactical drills seek to simulate the conditions of performance, tactical fitness must not.

Biomechanics proves that swinging a heavier bat, throwing a heavier ball, and striking with heavier gloves significantly reduces swing, throw, strike accuracy, and speed.

An exercise should stimulate the strength of the movement pattern, joint position, speed, and type of contraction without simulating the actual skill against resistance. If you simulate the tactical skill under exercise resistance, you slow the speed, diminish the accuracy, and decrease the power of the actual skill when calling upon it to perform under stress.

Let's discuss how to stimulate the strength for a shooting platform without simulating the actual skill against resistance.

#### ENTER THE PISTOL PUSHUP

I created the pistol pushup to stimulate the movement, joint position, and type of contraction needed to move from compressed to extended ready position.

Compare the tension of the pistol pushup to the conventional pushup. The muscles of the vise-clamp engage the core, activated through exhalation. Called the Hollow-Body in gymnastics, your large posterior muscles engage, the pelvis slightly tucks to activate your glutes and hamstrings, and your abs become strong to resist the backward extension of recoil. In exercise science, we measure abdominal strength using a grip dynamometer. So, with the pistol pushup, you exploit that relationship of your grip to your abs.

Begin on your knees. Lay the fingers of your supporting hand down, thumb indexing forward, place your gripping hand in a fist thumb forward, inside your supporting hand.

Tuck your tailbone slightly, contract your abs as you exhale strongly. Lower your elbows to your ribs with no elbow pop away from your ribs. Roll your shoulders forward lower than your elbows. Maintain this position, flair your lats, and squeeze your triceps, as you exhale and drive to the top of the pushup.

Begin with five sets of five repetitions. Make your pace slow and smooth. Take one to two minutes between sets to ensure full recovery and to build a solid platform. Progress to four sets of eight, then three sets of 10. When you have performed three sets of 10 repetitions in three workouts using very good technique, then, you can lift your knees off the ground, feet at shoulder width, and start over at five sets of five.

#### LOAD AND UNLOAD AN EXERCISE

Most people know you need to perform a warm-up and a cool-down, but few understand why. A proper warm-up restores the mobility needed to enter into an exercise, so you can remove the padlocks that your job and your life have accrued. If you're stiff and tight, or hurt and injured, that immobility prevents you from optimizing technique. Your warm-up specifically removes the padlocks to access the full range of motion necessary for good form.

Any exercise that isn't specifically unloaded after your body performs it, will, at first, give you results, but afterward, tightness. You'll then meet diminishing returns, followed by backslide, aches, pain and, finally, injury. Every practiced skill has a specific movement pattern and joint position which if trained to the exclusion of its complementary opposite creates imbalance and dysfunction.



## THE BULLDOG

Most consistent shooters have elbow tendonitis accompanied by wrist pain, and even progressing to shoulder bursitis and neck and lower back pain. Each can be prevented through warming up with the Bulldog, an exercise I created to restore wrist and shoulder mobility, and enable elbow stability.

On your hands and knees, rotate one hand inward as far as you can while still placing the palms flat. Then, rotate the other internally to meet it. Go as far as you can pushing through the discomfort. If you encounter more than a minor ache, back off and go shallower.

Slowly extend your elbows as closely to locked position as possible while exhaling deeply. Then, pull your shoulders off of your neck and pack your shoulder blades downward. Bend your elbows again, but keep your shoulders in this position. Repeat 10 times. Slowly release your hands from the ground, and perform 10 elbow circles in the air. Then, repeat two more sets of 10 repetitions of the Bulldog on the ground before moving on to the Pistol Pushup exercise.

## THE SEAL

On your hands and knees, rotate one hand outward as far as you can

without bending at the spine and while keeping the palm completely flat. Rotate the other hand outward the same way.

Slowly squeeze the triceps to lock the elbows, and roll the shoulders off of the neck and the shoulder blades packed down (just like the Bulldog). Exhale through the mouth and sit back away from your hands keeping the heels of your palms down. Back off if you feel any sharp pain. Go to this edge and hold there for 20 seconds. Then, slowly come out, perform 10 elbow and wrist circles in the air and repeat the Seal position two more times exactly like the first.

## CONCLUSION

Injuries in physical training are 100-percent preventable. If you follow the TACFIT program, train specifically, warm up sufficiently, and cool down properly, not only will you see carryover into your tactical skills, drills, scenarios, and simulations, you can do so pain and injury-free, but the process will never end. Padlocks will accrue. Organize your PT so that you remove your padlocks through your warm-up, stimulate the strength without simulating the skill in your exercise, and prevent padlocks from growing more tightly embedded through your cool-down. 📺

The Bulldog



The Seal







I was holding the XPRT 2.0 boot in my hand and examining it very critically.

I was wondering if 5.11 Tactical could live up to its “Always Be Ready” motto. With the boot in my hand, I immediately came up with a simple test that could challenge the motto.

I've always figured if a company is openly supportive of our armed forces and first responders, then its gear had better hold up to the worst conditions. In this case, a failed boot in a combat deployment could start a chain reaction that could cost a life.

At the time, I had a brother serving with the 101st Airborne Division on his second deployment to Afghanistan. His frequent foot patrolling motivated the test of these boots. I wondered how a boot like this would perform if my brother

ordered a pair and needed to use them immediately in the field. So, the scenario was simple: receive the boots in the mail, put them on, and start walking with no break-in period. I set two straightforward criteria to determine if 5.11 created a solid operational boot. First, the boot had to survive a 25-mile walk in rough terrain without revealing any defects. Second, my feet had to survive the walk without injury, including blisters. 5.11 suggested that the boot be broken in for a few days before deploying operationally. Yeah, right! Servicemen and women simply don't have a few days to break-in equipment while overseas. With this in mind I was ready to disprove their readiness motto.

I chose to hike in the most rugged

area of the California desert that I know. There's gravel, sand, fine talc powder sand (AKA moon dust), mud, and salt crystals in the form of flat terrain and jagged, reef-like structures. The route was long enough and the terrain rough enough that after 25 miles the boots would likely be well on their way to being trashed.

The XPRT 2.0 boots are constructed of nubuck, suede, and ripstop nylon with an eVent liner. The outsole seemed tough with a good tread. The boots were solid, which made me think they were quality. Out of the box the boots felt stiff. In my hand they didn't flex much and were a bit heavier than many of 5.11's other boots. I was starting to think I was going to have hamburger feet by the end of the walk.





# 5.11 TACTICAL'S XPRT 2.0

BY JOHN WILSON  
PHOTOS BY 5.11 TACTICAL

This wasn't a movement I wanted to do alone, so I invited a friend, Cory B. We stepped off into a huge valley carrying lightly loaded 5.11 Tactical RUSH 72 packs containing:

- |                                 |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| › 100-ounce hydration reservoir | › First-aid kit  |
| › 1-liter Tritan bottle         | › Sun screen     |
| › Stainless-steel cup           | › Food           |
| › Lightweight tarp              | › Beverage mix   |
| › Knife                         | › Radio          |
| › Cordage                       | › Flashlight     |
| › Fire-starter                  | › Chemical light |
|                                 | › Whistle        |
|                                 | › Signal mirror  |
|                                 | › Mylar blanket  |
|                                 | › Poncho liner   |

Another pal, Ben F. was our safety. He paralleled our route in a truck along a road while we walked straight through the middle of the valley. The







road was elevated, and he had line of sight with us the entire time using binoculars. We communicated with 35-mile range radios. Every hour, Ben contacted us with a series of preformatted questions and tasks:

- Signal with the mirror
- What time is it?
- GPS coordinates
- Provide compass azimuth with two known points
- Describe your foot pain on a scale of one to 10
- Where was the pain on the feet?
- What was causing the pain?
- Eat a PowerGel
- Drink water

The questions and instructions ensured several things: we were always visible to Ben, we weren't

experiencing cognitive degradation from the heat, our location could be marked on a map, we could provide the status and performance of the boots, and he reminded us to eat and drink. As our safety, Ben was there to keep us on track.

Walking is such a simple exercise: left foot, right foot. It's not rocket science. But psychologically, blisters, or ligament damage and pain can slow a person down and cause a serious distraction from the mission. If the boot cannot manage moisture, this can increase susceptibility to blisters. If the boot is too loose in areas — blisters. Too tight in other areas? Say hello to blisters and pinch points. No one should be distracted by their feet while doing their job. The end-user should be able to don the boot, lace it up, and move out. But if distractions are present, mistakes happen.

I chose to wear 5.11's Cold Weather OTC (Over the Calf) socks. I like thick merino wool socks, even in hot weather. Cory wore 5.11's Year Round

OTC cotton and copper thread socks. We put the brand new boots on, laced them up, put on our packs, and started walking per the test standard.

During the first 3 miles, we walked across a surface that was mostly softball sized rocks spread out across the desert floor. The terrain was a slight downhill grade interrupted by small washes. The boots felt fine, and we were fresh. At mile 4, I became concerned. The boots began to pinch at my ankles. This wasn't good, especially since we had 21 miles to go. When Ben stopped us at the top of the hour, I adjusted the laces to take pressure off of my ankles as my feet swelled (which is normal). The relief was instant and a mile later, there was no pain at all.

The desert soon turned to what I'll call pavement — compact small rocks and gravel mixed with sand. As we travelled down the very slight slope, the rocks got smaller and more compact and walking was easy. Then, around mile 5, we started hitting



consecutively deeper washes, each one deeper than the last. The washes were bordered with talc-like sand. I thought the sand would penetrate the boots and cause problems, however, no sand came in. Occasionally, we would encounter slimy, salty mud. The boot tread held fast and cleared well.

After the washes, the valley opened up to a never-ending salt flat from a dried up prehistoric lake. The salt flats were only interrupted by small, 3-inch-high pressure ridges. Now we were moving! I figured the rest of the walk after mile 6 would be a breeze. I was wrong...

Walking along the salt flats was easy. By mile 6, the boots were broken in; they were soft at the creases, supportive on the sides and the toe. The XPRT 2.0 has less than 10 millimeters of rise from

heel to toe. This provides a very low profile, a responsive feel, and an anatomical fit.

Around mile 7, the flats turned into jagged, deep salt structures. We tried to avoid them, but after a while and a lot of wasted energy we decided to walk straight through the worst terrain. It was like walking on a dried coral reef — extremely sharp, with in the jagged formations. One slip meant getting cut badly. Our pace went from roughly 13-minute miles to 30-minute miles. Each step in the jagged salt had to be calculated. It was hot, slow, and agonizing. It was hell. But, we were really testing the boots. And that was awesome.

The rest of the day continued the mix of salt flats and jagged rock, where it was slow in the rough sections and fast in the flats. Every hour we stopped for our checks, and

several times we adjusted the boots until our feet stopped swelling.

As we neared the end of the 25 miles, I realized I was dog tired, especially from walking so slowly through the broken terrain. More importantly, I realized our feet were fine. No hot spots, no blisters, no injuries. The boots themselves were perfectly fine. In fact, they looked brand new above the hem of our Ridgeline pants. There were scuffs from the salt formations, but no actual cuts. No threads were pulled apart. Nothing was wrong with the boots.

Damn. 5.11 created a badass boot.

I was comfortable sending this boot to my brother. In fact, I have continued to test the boots. They have survived several ascents, river crossings, and real-world everyday tactical wear. Whenever I need solid footwear, these boots are “Always Ready.” 📷

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Wilson is the owner of CBL Training and Consulting, specializing in tactical bio-psychology and outdoor skills. He has 22 years of professional experience. Wilson is also a U.S. Army veteran and a fulltime peace officer in California. He's currently working on his PhD in forensic psychology.

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